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THE
CONSTANT LOVER;

OR,
WILLIAM AND JEANETTE:

A TALE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF A. VON KOTZEBUE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LITERARY LIFE OF
THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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THE

CONSTANT LOVER;

WILLIAM AND JEANETTE;

A TALE.

BY THE CHIEF OF THE POLICE.



BY THE

W. H.

LONDON:

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OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

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THE
CONSTANT LOVER;

OR,

WILLIAM AND JEANETTE;

A TALE.

CHAP. I.

THE PRISONERS.

IS the love of war a natural propensity, like the love of dancing? Does the Supreme Being supply mankind with life and strength merely for his amusements, as the English feed their game-cocks?—

VOL. II.

B

Or

Or is war the child of hunger, like the ravage of the hawk? or does it arise from the craving appetite of the rulers of nations?

A great philosopher, and therefore no friend of mine (since creatures who are guided only by categorical imperatives assimilate as ill with friendship as the cedars of Lebanon with a bean-stalk), maintains that this insignificant planet, the existence of which our neighbour Jupiter never once suspects, was formed to be the scene of *war of all against all*. Good men are averse to acknowledge such cruel theories. Good men are more inclined to adopt the observation, that from the elephant down to the polypus the instinct of love awakes in the spring in every living creature, breathes life and sensibility into millions of beings, and when winter approaches again expires. If, however, the propensity to kill reverses this order; if it awakes in the
spring

spring only to destroy, the business of the soldier is at variance with the course of nature. Love alone should take the field, and the May-dew should mingle with the tears of fondness to render every grain of powder useless which is destined to destroy the existence of any being capable of the tender passion.

Such were the reflections which William indulged when, after the lapse of a happy winter, he received the unwelcome order to hold himself in readiness to march, to envelope the first genial rays of the sun in clouds of smoke, and to tread the rising seed deep in the bosom of the earth. For five months he had now experienced, that what the most ardent imagination conceives of the joys of first love falls infinitely short of the inexhaustible felicity of domestic content; that if the imagination of the enamoured youth lends him the fiery chariot of the prophet to soar into visionary

heavens, sober reality brings him down to earth and to humanity, but lays him on a bed of roses. His intoxication was now gone; he enjoyed the flame, however, which formerly had been exposed to every puff of wind, and threatened at last to consume the rich fuel by which it was fed. Now, indeed, it resembled the lamp which has been discovered at Portici; enclosed in the pure crystal lamp of marriage, it burnt with a mild and eternal light.

Large cities, in one respect, resemble a retired cottage; you may live in them just as you please; nobody troubles himself how the happy recluse spends his time. If you allow the great to enjoy their feasts, their routs, and their card-parties undisturbed, they will permit you, with a contemptuous smile at your singularity, to remain happy at home. William had fully availed himself of this permission. A fond accomplished wife,
a proved

proved friend, a simple yet plentiful table, a glass of good wine, and a superfluous guinea for a brother in distress—such were his pleasures; and he who requires more for the happiness of life is indeed to be pitied, were he even possessed of the wealth for which he fights.

Wishes rarely abandon even the happiest breast. But William belonged to that class of the peculiar favourites of destiny, who feel no other wish but “that every thing may continue as it now is;” who wish to lose nothing of what they enjoy, and covet nothing more. The king had presented him with a small estate in the country. “God send the king peace!” would he often exclaim, “that I may retire from the army to enjoy what his bounty has bestowed, and what love will adorn.” The country round it is delightful, and the neighbourhood inhabited by old proud nobility, who would not condescend to

visit new-raised merit. What transporting prospects ! Love, friendship, a country life, and no company !

The roses on Jeanette's cheeks were now indeed a little faded, and the usual lustre of her eye was obscured ; but the happy husband rejoiced at the symptoms, and anxiously longed for the pledge of faithful love. Ambition was asleep in his breast. Willingly would he have taken the laurel from his brow to deck the cradle of his son.

Never, therefore, was an order to march more unwelcome than that which William had received. Several days he concealed the disagreeable intelligence from his wife, now become doubly dear to him. The penetrating eye of love, however, soon discovered his anxiety ; Jeanette had long trembled at the thought of a new separation ; she endeavoured to arm herself with firmness, and speak to William that comfort which she herself
so

so much required. She concealed her tears, and wept only in the silence of night when William seemed to be asleep at her side. If her sobs waked him from his slumbers, she imputed her agitation to an unpleasant dream.

His tenderness would almost have induced him, at the opening of the campaign, to quit the service; but Jeanette opposed this sacrifice. "It shall not be scornfully said of you that you lost your warlike ardour in my arms; never shall it be said that you have been ungrateful to your sovereign. Go to the field—be courageous, but not fool-hardy; remember your duty, but remember too the helpless innocent whom yet you have not seen. When you return, he will bound to you with cries of fondness from my breast. When you have fulfilled the demands of duty, ungird your sword, and let our boy play with your arms while you repose upon my bosom."

Thus did she conceal her anxiety and her grief under a feigned heroism, while the moment of separation was still at some distance. When, however, the Sunday of the last week arrived, and William's regiment for the last time marched in procession to church, her courage disappeared, and she trembled like a condemned criminal as she tied William's belt over his shoulder. He went to church—and anxiety and devotion prompted her likewise to go thither. During the sermon she had frequently, unobserved, wiped away the falling tear; but when the chaplain of the regiment began to offer up a solemn prayer for the success of their arms, when he blessed the assembled warriors, and the tear dropped upon the whiskers of the old grenadiers, she hid her face in her muff, and prayed in speechless grief.

With what warmth did her heart repeat the words of the preacher: "Per-
mit

mit me, O God ! to see all those who are now before thee once more assembled in this place ; let not one of them be missing ; and in thy temple let us hear the triumphant voice of gratitude, not the complaint of the widow, and the wailing of the orphan !”

She returned home quite exhausted. Her courage had fled. In two days the regiment was to march. Every hour she heard the dreadful note of preparation under her window. Baggage and stores were continually passing through the streets, and the dull sound of the cannon rattled along. Every thing was alive ; every thing was in motion, while she lay weeping before a trunk packing up her husband's linen. She had prepared bandages and lint in case he should be wounded, and twenty times informed his servant where he would find every thing the moment it was wanted.

After this melancholy task was per-

formed, she wandered disconsolate from room to room, and fixed her sorrowful eyes on the empty spot where William's camp bed had stood, now on the bare wall where William's pistols were used to hang. When the morning of separation arrived, and William had stolen early from her side to drown in bustle and activity the agony of separation, she threw herself into a carriage, and drove on for half a mile to a cottage, where she was to bid her husband farewell.

A thick cloud of dust announced the approach of the troops. One regiment after another marched past. Women and children pressed with cries of sorrow between the ranks ; here a weeping grenadier led a little girl by the hand, while the pregnant mother walked sobbing beside them ; here a lusty boy carried his father's musket ; here a rough, blunt soldier shook his aged mother's hand ; there another embraced his wife, who clung

elung in tears round his neck. Young fellows, who had no attachments, laughed and made merry, waving their hats adorned with green leaves. Here and there pedlars and hucksters offered their wares to sell. Many drank to drown care, and tears trickled into the glass.

Jeanette saw nothing that passed. Her heart beat, her breath was irregular, her eyes were inflamed. She gazed with fixed attention towards the gate from which the troops still continued to pour. The well-known uniform of William's regiment now glanced in her view. William rode carelessly on at the head of his battalion. The once fiery steed paced along with sober steps. The reins had unperceived dropped upon the horse's neck. When William reached the cottage, he leaped from his horse, and Jeanette from the carriage. He flew to her pale as death, and she sunk down in his arms. He kneeled by her side, pressed

his cold lips to hers, which glowed with feverish heat, left the marks of his tears on her cheek, sprung hastily up, and mounted his steed. Jeanette lay insensible. When she recovered, the distant drum sounded in her ear. She rose, looked down the valley, and saw the last clouds of dust driving in the wind.

She quitted her attendants, retired into a neighbouring thicket, fell upon her knees, and prayed. Spare, ye sceptres ! spare the sorrowful heart this comfort in affliction ! which, if it does not heal the wound, protects it against the violence of external assaults. Happy the mortal who is confident in prayer ! Tranquillity and hope are the rewards of his pious conviction. Early in the morning when she awoke, late in the evening when she retired to rest, Jeanette revived herself with this cordial balsam. It strengthened her in the heavy hour of her delivery, and banished every melancholy

choly presage concerning her husband's fate.

Alas ! his regiment was but too soon engaged in a severe action between the advanced posts. William fought by the side of his friend, and was surrounded. He saw his gallant comrades fall around him, and, overpowered by numbers, was at last obliged to yield. He and Frederick were taken prisoners. After being plundered by the enemy's hussars, they were conducted to the camp. There, indeed, they were treated with respect, but closely watched ; and in a few days they were sent off, with a number of other prisoners, into the interior of France.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE BRUNETTE.

WANT and sorrow accompanied William in his captivity. One consolation only was left him. He was not separated from his friend, whose ear and heart were ever open to his sighs, and who listened to the eternal monotony of his complaints with unwearied attention. Often had Frederick formerly laughed at him, as an enamoured enthusiast, and teased him with his raillery, telling him that marriage was fain to keep itself warm by the embers which the flame of love left behind, and that even these it would often extinguish when they began to glow. Now, however, he acknowledged that Love did not always extinguish his torch when Hymen lighted his, since never had William doted on his wife

wife with such fond affection. The
 flame of first desire, which the soft gales
 of undisturbed possession blow invisibly
 from heart to heart, was now awakened
 by the regret of separation. He thought
 only of Jeanette. He spoke only of
 her; no privations affected him, no ob-
 ject could engage his curiosity. Plun-
 dered and stript of the most urgent ne-
 cessaries, he leapt for joy when in a cor-
 ner of his pocket he found a small ink-
 horn and a silver pen, which had escaped
 the avarice of the hussars. He now
 daily wrote a letter, at every place where
 the escort stopped, when he could find
 even a stone by the road-side to serve as
 a table. When others ate or slept, his
 heart was awake. Grief, the pain of sepa-
 ration, the fondest consolation, the most
 glowing hopes of meeting he painted in
 his letters with the most ardent enthu-
 siasm; and with what grateful rapture
 did

did he press to his breast the good-natured corporal, who promised to forward his first letter !

After a long and fatiguing journey, they at last arrived at the place of their destination, a little town in Guienne. Here they received permission to go about at large on their parole of honour. They durst not avail themselves much of this indulgence, as the deluded people hated every foreigner, as the slave of despotism, and thought themselves justified, with savage ferocity to seize the slightest pretext to insult or even to murder men whom they considered as tools hired for their subjugation.

During the day, therefore, William and Frederick seldom left their sorry habitation. Commonly they stole out in the twilight, strolled through the blooming fields, stretched themselves on the banks of the Garonne, or at noon sought

the hospitable hut of some peasant, who entertained them with milk, honey, and fruit.

One evening they accidentally met with a German book ; and as they had so long been deprived of the pleasure of reading, they congratulated themselves on the feast that awaited them next morning. The first rays of the sun found the two friends already in the fields. The unclouded sky and the dewy grass seemed to threaten a warm day, and they sought, therefore, at a little distance from the town, a shady thicket which lay on the brow of a hill. There they found a delightful retired spot, and stretched themselves under an olive tree. William pulled the book out of his pocket, and Frederick lay carelessly on the grass.

They had not been here above two hours when a wild din from the neighbouring village struck their ears. They were alarmed, and hesitated whether they

they should leave their retreat, or conceal themselves deeper in the wood. The last might appear suspicious; they remained, therefore, where they were, resolved to return to the town as soon as the road should be clear, for it passed directly by the village church, from the steeple of which proceeded the alarm which had roused their apprehension.

As they listened, and lost themselves in conjectures respecting the cause of the tumult, they suddenly heard a rustling in the thicket at a little distance. It seemed as if a flying roe rushed past them. It came nearer—again it seemed to recede—sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left—the irregular breathing of a person exhausted with running apprised them that some one was at hand. The two friends held in their breath, and anxiously looked towards the place from which the sound seemed nearer and nearer to approach.

“ Here.

"Here you are!" exclaimed hastily and in a feeble voice a brown girl, with flowing hair and disordered dress, while with eager anxiety, and occasionally looking behind, she broke upon the astonished strangers.

"Fly! fly!" fluttered she with a voice scarcely articulate, "they are coming, they are in pursuit of you. —You will be found here—and you are gone!"

"How? Why? What is the matter?"

The girl was exhausted and could not answer, she only pointed with her finger to the footpath; and when the strangers still hesitated, she ran before them, pointed and folded her hands in the attitude of entreaty. William and Frederick at last followed her, without knowing why or whither. Their swift conductor soon brought them to a fisherman's empty hut. Here she sank down on the grass, and exclaimed: "I can do no more!"

Her

Her full bosom heaved with violent agitation ; the blood forsook her cheeks. Yet now and then she struggled to hold in her breath, turned towards the village to listen, and again panted more violently. The two friends stood before her, and knew not what to think of this extraordinary incident. They gave her time to recover herself. Frederick lighted upon a wooden dish in the hut, which he filled with water and gave her. She drank a few drops, and bathed her cheeks, to cool the glowing heat. When at last she recovered the use of her tongue, she told them, in broken incoherent sentences :

“ Some ill-inclined persons have last night cut down the tree of liberty in our village. The whole village is in an uproar. The young men have taken arms, and are in search of the perpetrators, and if taken they will be put to death.— You have been observed, for some weeks past,

past, to skulk about in this neighbourhood; it is suspected that you are the culprits."

"We!" exclaimed the two friends in amazement.

"I believe you are not," proceeded the girl, "you appear to be men of honour; and even were you guilty, I could see nobody murdered. My Philip, too, is in the mob; he has his sword, and swears to put you to death. I tremble yet to think of his dreadful oaths—and if he sheds blood I can no more love him. This morning, very early, as I was feeding my pigeons, I saw you pass by the village, and stroll into this thicket; the cow-herd likewise saw you, and gave the information. Now they are about to surround this grove, and will not rest till you are found. Here have I run to save innocent blood, and implored my guardian angels that with their help I might fortunately meet you, and they
have

have graciously heard my prayer!—
Haste! endeavour to gain the town by
a circuitous way, for here you are not
safe. I would accompany you with all
my heart, but I can go no farther!

“If you follow this footpath, it will
carry you into the road to Montauban;
then leave our village on your left hand,
and after making a circuit of a few miles
you may in the twilight return to
town.”

“But we are innocent,” said William.

“We have never even seen your tree
of liberty,” pursued Frederick.

“That will avail you nothing,” re-
turned the girl hastily. “You will be
murdered—you are strangers—you are
not French citizens (this she said with
some degree of solemnity). Nobody
will demand satisfaction for your lives.
Fly! fly! Heard you not the voices in
the thicket?—In a few minutes it will
be too late!”

William

William and Frederick soon perceived that, in spite of their innocence, their lives were in danger, and that they had not a moment to lose. They thanked their generous deliverer, and flew down the pathway which she had pointed out. It soon brought them into an unknown road, where they stopped a little to take breath, and to confirm the observation which has so long been made by travellers in every part of the world, that women are every where more courteous, more gentle, more benevolent, and more humane towards strangers than men.

CHAP. III.

THE COFFIN.

AS they had now left the dreaded village a good way behind, the fugitives considered themselves safe, rested a few minutes, and then slowly pursued their way, blessing the generous girl who, notwithstanding her pride in the title of a French citizen, had so kindly apprised them of their danger. They soon perceived, however, that the enthusiastic spirit, like a raging lioness, had thrown the whole country round into alarm and apprehension by its wild roar. They found, that in our times the cutting down of a tree of liberty can excite the same fury, which two hundred years ago the destruction of a cross, or two thousand years ago the violation of a sacred oak, would have occasioned.

When

When Alcibiades demolished the statue of Mercury, the Athenians raged just like the new men of France about their tree of Liberty. On the right and on the left, before and behind the fugitives, the fullen sound of bells was heard in all the villages. They redoubled their speed. The road led to a hill, which they endeavoured to reach; but, alas! under the brow of the hill lay a village, from which the confused noise of shouts and the rattling of arms proceeded. Hastily they wheeled round, ran rapidly down the hill, directly back again, and perceived, at a distance, a cloud of dust, which warned them that their pursuers were at hand.

They now flew over hedges and ditches across the fields; sometimes they thought of concealing themselves in the standing corn; sometimes they thought of hiding themselves in a farmer's haystack; but a loud-mouthed cur or a bawl-

ing infant frightened them away. They now knew not whither they went, ran through brooks and morasses, without reflection. They heard the alarm all around, and at last they arrived, without suspecting it, at the road they had left.

The danger every moment increased. The fields round were covered with their pursuers ; before and behind, clouds of dust rolled ; the bells rang from every steeple, and the shouts of men and the barking of dogs broke on them from every quarter.

“ I can go no farther !” said William. “ Heaven protect my wife and child ! Here will I die !”

He sunk down under a tree. Frederick summoned up all his strength, climbed the tree, and viewed the country round.

“ I see a country-house,” said he, “ not two thousand paces distant. Be-
long to whom it may, the owner will
surely

surely protect us at least from the fury of the mob. If he is a man of honour, he will deliver us into the hands of the civil power, but not permit us—even should he consider us guilty—to be murdered like wild beasts by a frantic rabble.”

He came down. William rose, and they exerted every effort to gain the country-house. In a romantic valley, through which a branch of the Garonne rolled meandering, lay a solitary habitation, shaded by lofty elms, on the north side bounded by a thick grove, which stretched down to the banks of the river. The fugitives arrived, without interruption, at the iron gate that bounded the front lawn, which was tastefully ornamented with flower-beds. They found the doors shut and barred. William boldly took a stone, and knocked loud at the iron wicket. The grove re-echoed the sound, but no dog barked, no living creature stirred. They called.

Nobody answered. The house appeared to be empty. A number of broken windows confirmed the supposition. The railing was too high for them to climb over, and too strong for them to break. The moments were precious. William and Frederick hastened to the other side of the grove, there to look for a place where they might wait the shades of night.

The grove was likewise surrounded by a pretty high wall, but time had here and there loosened the stones ; and fear lent them wings, for the voices of their pursuers already resounded through the valley. A gloomy thicket of tall pines received them in its shade. Here they listened a few moments; and as the whole grove seemed to be inhabited by the feathered creation, as the linnets and bullfinches hopped as fearlessly about them as if they had never seen a human form, they ventured to penetrate deeper into its recesses.

They

They soon perceived that a little walk, in the style of the English gardens, skirted round the whole of the grove ; but the grass that grew thick through the gravel, which was here and there broken up by the rain, and not repaired, seemed to prove that it was long since it had been trod by human foot. Courageously the two friends advanced, intending, if possible, to take possession of some empty corner of the house ; when Frederick suddenly stopped, as William pulled him by the coat and pointed, with a mixture of fear and surprise, to the mark of a lady's foot in a mole-hill.

It was now plain that this must have happened yesterday or the day before, consequently the house with the broken windows was not altogether uninhabited, and the fugitives remained irresolute in new embarrassment and apprehension. In spite of their dangerous situation (for the voice of their pursuers

still founded more terrible in the valley) their feelings, on perceiving the prints of the foot were very different from those which Robinson Crusoe had experienced on a similar occasion. They could not cease to contemplate with pleasure the mark, which was that of an elegant foot; and William thought, that if it was possible that Jeanette could be here, it must have been made by hers. For a moment fear gave place to softer emotions. So feels the traveller, who, surrounded by the murky shades of night, suddenly descries at a distance a friendly light.

What a powerful effect does an inch more or less produce upon the senses of men, through them on the imagination, and so on upon the understanding! Had the mark covered the whole of the mole-hill, the idea of beauty, and with it of harmless goodness, would not have associated with the feelings of our fugitives. Perhaps, alarmed at the appearance,

ance, they might have again made their retreat over the walls. A creature, however, that had such elegant feet, seemed so little calculated to inspire terror, that they were inclined to wish rather than to avoid a meeting.

With more caution and circumspection they now pursued the winding way, which appeared to lead to the banks of the river. The murmuring of the stream soon convinced them that they were right; and after descending the footpath, winding through a thick shrubbery, down a gentle declivity, they commanded a prospect of the water. They observed a little island, on which was built, with singular art and taste, a grotto, surrounded with weeping willows, which bended their branches to the stream. A little draw-bridge led to the island. This secret recess appeared a secure asylum, and they redoubled their steps to reach the bridge. Silently they

passed over, and drew it up behind them. Silently, and with some anxiety, they approached the avenue to the grotto. Frederick was a few steps before, as William was detained fixing the bridge. When William had finished, and was running up to overtake him, he saw his friend suddenly turn round, his face pale, and his knees trembling. He laid his finger on his mouth, waved his hand, and by his gestures signified that William should approach without noise.

William obeyed, and threw a fearful glance towards the grotto, which was lighted by a window in the roof. Two coffins lay close together, covered with black, and without any ornament. Upon one of the coffins lay a female figure, in profound grief, her back towards them, and her head leaning upon her hand. She seemed to be asleep, or to be lost in grief—they did not hear her breathe.

Dreadfully

Dreadfully shocked at this spectacle, the two friends stood motionless, and conversed only by doubtful looks. They waited long to see whether this solemn figure would turn round. As not the least movement betrayed the appearance of life, and they saw a beetle crawling on her white neck, without attracting her attention, Frederick began to think that she must be in a swoon, and ventured to advance a few steps nearer. His foot trod upon some dry leaves: they rustled—the figure rose up. Heavens! what a creature! with every quality of an angel but fearlessness!

Fair as a lily, with long flowing black hair, an eye mild as the evening star surrounded with light clouds, her bosom negligently covered, whose dazzling whiteness was heightened by the contrast of her black robe, a tall elegant form, a hand which seemed formed to wipe away the tears of love, a foot which

the fugitives easily recognised to be that which had left the mark in the grove—Such did the lovely stranger stand before them, in the first bloom of her charms. Had not her full bosom anxiously heaved—had not her white hand trembled, they would have dropped on their knees before her, as a superior being. Frederick stood speechless, with his eyes riveted to this celestial figure. William endeavoured to speak, but it was only in broken sentences. The stranger first broke silence.

“Who are you?—What do you want?—Why have you intruded upon this sanctuary of my grief?—Would you rob me even of these dear remains?”

At these words she hastily threw the lid from one of the coffins, and discovered the corpse of an old man, whose head was severed from his body. This shocking spectacle occasioned a long pause, during which the young lady gazed

at the corpse with folded hands, and shed a tender tear. Frederick was unable to speak, nor did he attempt to reply. William collected himself as well as he could, and in soothing accents began to relate the accident which had brought them here. He begged for an asylum for a few hours, till they could elude their pursuers. The uproar, which every moment grew louder and louder, testified the truth of his story.

As William spoke, the young lady's attention was involuntarily fixed by his figure and discourse. When he had finished, her looks fluctuated doubtfully between him and his companion. She had not made any answer, when a wild mob was heard thundering at the iron gate, and another round the walls of the grove.

"What can I do to assist you?" said she: "Where can I conceal you?—

Every corner of the grove is well known to these monsters. From its most secret recesses they dragged my aged father, and cruelly murdered him!" She burst into tears, and seemed anew to be quite engrossed with her grief, till a noise at the gate louder than before announced that the mob had burst it open.

"They come!" said William. Frederick did not seem to hear them. "They come!" repeated the lady with anxiety. "It is too late to take you to the desolate mansion—there you would be—but no—it is too late. Fly! fly! I cannot see you murdered!"

The frantic rabble now rushed through the garden in crowds. Nothing remained for the fugitives but to plunge into the river; but it was deep, and neither of them could swim. "Ha!" exclaimed William, "for what an inglorious death has fate reserved me!"—

Frederick

Frederick said nothing. He gazed at the young lady, and seemed to be utterly insensible.

The young mourner walked up and down, wringing her hands. She looked compassionately at the strangers, and appeared to struggle with a thought which she sometimes reluctantly dismissed, and again benevolently cherished. William saw what passed in her soul. He threw himself at her feet : " If this angel form can give the least pledge of humanity, save an unfortunate being, who has left in his own land other helpless creatures dependent on him ! "

" Humanity ! " repeated the lady, " Alas ! that was denied to me ! "

Suddenly the whole grove resounded with the voices of men, and on all sides the shouts of frenzy were heard. It rushed like a whirlwind through the trees, and the frightened birds forsook their nests. The mob had already discovered

covered the path which led to the grotto; numbers had reached the bridge, and began to cut down with their scythes the pulleys by which it was drawn up. A glow overspread the young lady's cheeks; the mild lustre of her eye kindled into fire. She threw herself on the coffin. Anxiety lent her strength; she lifted out the dead body, and laid it on the mossy bank.

"Stranger! conceal yourself here," said she, pointing to the coffin. William sprang into it, and in a moment the lid was replaced. She now opened the second coffin. It was empty. She made a sign to Frederick, which she was thrice obliged to repeat before he understood. At last he threw himself into the coffin, but with an air which seemed to show that he only obeyed her commands. She shut the lid upon him, and at this moment the steps of their pursuers thundered over the bridge.

The

The young lady threw herself down between the two coffins, with an arm extended over each, and in this posture she awaited the arrival of the mob. They came.—Men armed with scythes, sickles, swords and muskets, surrounded the entry into the grotto; but suddenly the foremost stood still, as if thunderstruck, and kept back those behind, who, with gaping mouths, gazed over their shoulders.

“What do you want?” said the lady to them with firm voice. “Is it not enough that you have murdered my father? Would you also deprive me of a burdensome existence?—If so, you are welcome!—Come in! come in!—Dye your arms in the blood of an innocent orphan!—Murder me on the corpse of my father!”

The peasants looked at one another doubtfully. The contrast between the beauty of the lady and the bloody corpse, together

together with their disappointed expectations, made a powerful impresson on the rough sons of nature. The wild clamour was succeeded by a death-like silence. "Come, friends!" at last said one of them, "they are not here!"

"You may be perfectly easy, miss," said another, "tell us only where the villains have fled."

"Whom do you mean?" pursued the lady. "Since that old man fell under your weapons, no human foot has entered this solitude. If you mean to insult—if you mean to delight yourselves with the sight of a murdered man, come nearer! See how placidly he smiles; he has forgiven his murderers. Come in, and touch those cold hands, of whose blessing you have deprived me!"

At these words she seized the hand of the corpse, and held it out to them. The peasants were shocked, and started back. The hindermost disappeared; the crowd dispersed,

dispersed, and the last went away with fearful looks. "They are not here!" cried they as they crossed the bridge. "They are not here!" they sounded through the grove. The noise gradually subsided, and before a quarter of an hour elapsed, the birds had again taken possession of their nests, and a gloomy silence of the solitude.

CHAP. IV.

THE CAVERN.

SHOULD any of my sarcastic readers be inclined to laugh at the circumstance of a young beautiful lady, in the height of grief, taking the mutilated corpse of her father out of the coffin, in order to put a handsome young man into it, let them recollect the widow of Ephesus, who, from much more questionable motives, hung the body of her departed husband upon the gallows.

BABET—for it is now time to discover the name of this lovely guardian angel—Babet was the daughter of a nobleman, who had the misfortune to be rich, and to be a man of worth and honour. Of course he was obnoxious to the party now in power. They resolved to get rid of him in the usual manner; that is to say,

say, they denounced him as an aristocrat; he became a marked man; and the people, ever ready for such deeds, undertook the execution of the sentence. Two of his sons were murdered. The third fled, as was said, to America, there to weep in company with young La Fayette.

The old man himself chose the most retired of all his estates, and thought to escape persecution by a voluntary seclusion. In vain, however!—Party fury traced him to this harmless retreat, tore him from the arms of his only daughter, and hurried him to the scaffold.

Babet, in the sixteenth year of her age, had been educated in a cloister; and when the destroying angel, called *Liberty*, burst those holy cells, she returned to the bosom of her family. While she lived immured within the walls of the cloister, except the old blind gardener, she had never seen the face of
man;

man ; and, except a favourite cat, had never loved any thing. When she became acquainted with her worthy father, and her sprightly brothers, she loved them with her whole soul, and their sentiments and modes of thinking became hers ; for women rarely choose their own opinions, they are formed by the company in which they live. They commonly love with great constancy ; but if they ever change their attachments, they likewise change their principles.

Babet was a decided royalist. The death of her father and brothers at first made her quite delirious ; and still nourished by the solitude in which she lived, and the dreadful objects to which she was habituated, her grief bordered upon lunacy. She conversed only with the corpse of her father, she slept on the moss bank in the grotto, ate only the fruits which the trees accidentally presented ; never went beyond the limits
of

of the gloomy grove, was deserted by the officious servants of her former prosperity, and even dismissed the few who offered to share her danger and her poverty.

Her inflamed imagination had inspired her with a superstitious idea, which she neither could nor wished to drive from her mind. Having dreamed that on the anniversary of her father's birthday, which was to happen in a few weeks, she would be united to her father and brothers by a stroke of lightning, she was firmly convinced that the dream would be realised; for which reason she had prepared an empty coffin to receive her. This firm belief rendered her indifferent to what passed around her. She smiled when any attempt was made to amuse her, and wistfully shook her head when she was advised to collect the remains of her estates in different provinces, which were left a prey to rapine.

In this temper of mind the two friends found her ; and on seeing them, nature, for the first time, resumed her rights, and bound her to life with new and tender ties. A young lady, who, till now, seemed to be abandoned by God and the world, who had no relation, no friend to whom she could fly ; a young, helpless, insulated creature, could not but feel herself in a new element when she saw herself the deliverer of two handsome, generous young men. When Babet opened the coffin, she felt something as if she saw her brother rise from it. She was no longer without support. She had purchased at the risk of her life, perhaps of her honour, two grateful protectors.

The young men lay at her feet, pressed their glowing lips to her hand, and uttered soothing words of gratitude. A new and delightful feeling diffused itself through that breast, which, till now, had

had heaved only with sighs. She looked down upon the creatures with complacency ; she wished to complete the work of their deliverance ; she forgot her father's corpse, and she even forgot to reproach herself for her negligence.

" Follow me !" said she. " Your persecutors and mine might repent their having been surprised and overcome by a feeling of humanity ; they might suddenly return. Follow me into the mansion, which they have dismantled. I will conduct you to a cavern, which, for many weeks, served my father as a secure retreat. Alas ! he would have lived still had he not left it !"

Babet went out of the grotto. Frederick and William followed her ; the former like a person intoxicated ; the latter had recovered the perfect exercise of his faculties. With politeness and tender concern he conversed with their fair guide as she hastily walked on before them,

them, and he contrived to introduce so many refined and elegant compliments on her beauty and beneficence, that Babet, by degrees, was brought down from her converse with spirits to an intercourse with kindred mortals. She possessed so much consideration, as to avoid every open and exposed place of the garden, and to steal along between high hedges till she brought her guests safe through many a winding alley to the back-door of the desolate habitation.

Here they mounted a winding staircase, passed through a small antichamber, and went into the kitchen; where an old footman and a young servant girl lay trembling on their knees, imploring all the saints in the calendar for help. When the frantic mob broke into the garden, they thought that the rabble had come to destroy the last frail shoot of the old stem, and gave up their mistress for lost. When they heard footsteps on
the

the stair, they imagined that their own hour was come, and were pronouncing their last prayer. At the sight of Babet their terrors were changed into the wildest transports. They sprang up, leaped and sung around her, and it was a long time before she could make the footman understand that she wanted the key of the subterraneous cavern. He then ran to find it, sought it over the whole house from the garret to the cellar, and at last found it in his own pocket.

Babet now conducted the strangers into her father's closet. Here she took a lighted lamp, opened a concealed door in the tapestry, and descended a narrow stair-case, which, through many windings, terminated in a spacious vault. She sought and found an iron crow, which accident seemed to have left in a corner. She gave it to William, and desired him, as she pointed out the place in the wall, to remove the stones, which were but

newly built up, and were but weakly fastened.

He did as he was desired. An iron door appeared, so small that a person could hardly push through. Babet touched a concealed spring. The door flew open, and they entered a spacious cavern, which was furnished only with a few necessary articles of furniture, a straw bed, and a mattress.

“ Here you may remain quiet and easy till night-fall. Meanwhile I will dispatch a person to reconnoitre the road, and to bring intelligence. When all is safe, I myself will return and liberate you from this confinement. My servant, in the mean time, shall bring you bread and fruit for your refreshment. Except such scanty fare I have nothing to offer. The plunderers have robbed me of every thing. Meanwhile, replace the stone in the wall, and shut the iron door; you may then sleep in peace till I awake you.”

She

She disappeared. A few minutes after old Antony brought a light and a basket of fruit. The two friends were then left alone. Frederick threw himself on the straw-bed, and hid his face ; while William employed himself, in silence, in rebuilding the stones which formed the false wall that concealed the secret door.

CHAP. V.

THE TREASURE.

WHEN Cupid steals from his mother a handful of flax to make a love-net, the moment which the cunning rogue chooses to spread the flax on the enchanted spindle will decide the fortune of the enterprize, since on the first twist and pull it will depend whether the thread will ultimately be rough or smooth, coarse or fine.

To speak without metaphor, it is of the utmost importance for a lady who wishes to captivate a man she has never seen before to choose a situation, and to improve it with address, in which she can display all her female charms in the most seducing light. The observation is applicable both to the charms of body and of mind. Take a stranger into the
habitation

habitation of a divinity at the moment when she gives her waiting-maid a box on the ear—carry him then to the hut of a gentle creature, who, if you please, is deformed with freckles and the marks of the small-pox, he finds her employed in feeding a poor old man, or clothing a naked orphan—rely upon it the mortal will triumph over the divinity.

After this common-place remark, (for, alas! there is nothing new to be said under the sun, and Kant's great discoveries, when closely considered, turn out nothing but new words;) the reader will think it very natural that Frederick's heart, in which no damsel had yet been able to kindle a spark, suddenly burst out into a flame.

Consider only how many things combined to heighten the force of Babet's charms. The agitation of mind in which Frederick arrived before the entry to the grotto, and in which Babet appeared to

him like a star in a gloomy night, when perhaps in a more calm temper she might have seemed to his impartial glance like a taper at noon-day—besides the grief in which she was plunged, her helplessness, which, with youth and beauty, makes a most powerful impression; and last of all, the magnanimity with which she had exposed herself to save the life of two strangers—the romantic expedient she employed, which, in a critical moment, could have occurred to none but a woman—truly! though her eye had not been half so brilliant, though her bosom had not been half so round and white, though the print of her foot in the mole-hill had been as large again, Frederick, who was not, like his friend, protected by the ægis of honourable love, would not have failed to be as deeply wounded as he was.

He now lay upon the straw-bed, and shut his eyes to avoid the inquisitive
looks

looks of his companion. It was not that he wished to conceal any thing from the friend of his heart, but that he himself yet knew not what was the matter with him, or what exactly he had to communicate. That something extraordinary had befallen him he indeed was well aware; but he felt like a blind man, who, being couched for the cataract, does not venture to open his eyes, and spends some time in voluntary darkness.

William stood before him, and looked at the sick man with a gentle smile diffused over his countenance. At last he broke the mysterious silence with these words :

“ The adventure seems to have greatly affected you ? ”

FREDERICK.—Very much.

WILLIAM. — You like the young lady ?

FREDERICK (with a serious smile).—Like her ?

WILLIAM.—As you never liked before ?

FREDERICK.—Never.

WILLIAM.—Why do you shut your eyes ?

FREDERICK.—Because she is gone.

WILLIAM (after a pause).—I am afraid you are in love.

FREDERICK (turning aside).—Good William, be kind enough to leave me at present to my reflections.

William, who knew well that there are moments when a man would rather choose to be whipped than to be teased with questions—for the blows you may bear with stoical fortitude, but the questions you are compelled to answer—politely withdrew, and began to think of some amusement from the persecution of some spiders, which in a vault generally find a most secure abode. He walked backwards and forwards, whistled, sang, examined the furniture, and surveyed

veyed the inhabitants, which consisted of toads and beetles.

At last, having found a rusty nail, idleness suggested to him the amusement so natural in inns and prisons, of scrawling his name on the wall. For this purpose he took a view of the wall, and pitched upon the largest square stone, which was distinguished from the rest by some degree of colouring mingled with its grey hue. He took a chair to stand upon, which seemed to have been manufactured in the time of Henry IV. and with the lamp, now quite superfluous to his dreaming companion, in his left hand, the rusty nail in the right, he mounted up to immortalize his name in this subterraneous retreat.

But what was his astonishment when he held up the lamp and saw an inscription engraved upon the stone? It was clear that it had been formerly employed for the purpose he had intended, a cir-

cumstance which had made it whiter and more conspicuous than any of the rest. The characters were feeble, and in some places scarcely legible. With considerable exertion, however, William made out the following :

“ Dearest Babet ! If thy innocence at last can find no asylum but this ; if you are robbed of all, you will find, under this straw-bed, a proof that, even in his most dreary hours, thy father still remembered and cared for thee.”

William instantly communicated the discovery to Frederick, but Frederick seemed to treat it with indifference.—

“ What, don’t you hear ?” said William.

“ Rise, probably beneath that straw a treasure lies concealed.”

“ What is the treasure to us ?” said Frederick, and never stirred.

“ But it belongs to our guardian angel—to our generous deliverer !”

Scarce had William finished this remonstrance,

monstrance, when Frederick was on his feet, carefully turning over the straw. They found a place where the earth seemed loose. They employed the nail to dig it up, and in a few minutes they pulled out a casket, which was filled with articles of value. Transported at this accident, which enabled them to testify their gratitude to their generous hostess, they expected the coming night with redoubled impatience. Almost as much as in the discovery of the jewels seemed Frederick to rejoice in the discovery of the name of Babet ; for he did nothing but repeat this harmonious name, sometimes aloud, sometimes quite low, in tender and melting tones.

CHAP. VI.

THE VISIONARY.

ABOUT midnight, gliding softly, like a benignant spirit, the lovely form of their protectress approached. A gentle touch pressed the spring, the iron door flew open, and Babet entered.—“ You are not yet safe,” said she ; “ the neighbourhood swarms with drunken blood-thirsty murderers. You must remain here till to-morrow night, when, in all probability, tired of the tedious fruitless search, the peasants shall have returned to their occupations. In the mean time, indeed, you will be exposed to want and inconvenience, for I have nothing with which to entertain you. Scarcity, with good welcome, is your only cheer.” At
these

these words she laid on the table a few eggs, and a piece of black bread.

“Two hens,” said she with a melancholy smile—“two hens are, God knows, all that has escaped the general ravage and plunder. Alas! formerly our courtyard swarmed with poultry, for I delighted to feed them.—Now I have nothing to feed my favourite hens, but they are still alive, and I could not have the heart to kill them.—You must be content with the eggs.—I am almost sorry to rob them of these.”

“How fortunate is my friend,” said William, with a generous sacrifice of his own accidental merit—“how fortunate is my friend, that he can repay this benevolent kindness! While I was asleep he found a treasure which will place you, fair Babet, in a more comfortable situation than that in which you now live.”

Frederick stood beside him, and presented the casket. Babet looked with
doubtful

doubtful astonishment, now at her guests, now at the well-known casket, the appearance of which in the hands of strangers, as well as the mention of her name, seemed equally unaccountable. William took hold of the lamp, led Babet to the stone, mounted on the chair, and read her father's testament.

Scarcely had the tender girl recognised the traces of that honoured hand, no sooner had she heard the words "dearest Babet," than she dropped upon her knees, burst into tears, and raised her hands to the sacred stone. She received the casket as a relick, and pressed it with respect to her lips. "Honoured father," cried she, "thou knowest that I no longer stand in need of this provision!"

She now turned round to the two friends: "You have made strong professions of your gratitude. If indeed I have any claim to your thanks, it is in your power to discharge the obligation."

"Speak!"

“ Speak !” said William, while his friend’s eyes sparkled with eagerness ; and it was easy to read in them that he hoped it would at least demand the hazard of his life.

“ You will soon return to your native country,” continued Babet, “ and there it is my request that you would endeavour to obtain intelligence of the Chevalier Belloy. He fled to America—perhaps he is still alive !”—She said this with such warmth of feeling, her eye seemed to glance to heaven so ardent a prayer for the life of the Chevalier, that Frederick was greatly agitated. But he was soon relieved from his anxiety when the lovely creature proceeded : “ He is my brother—now my only brother !—To him belong these jewels ; they may enable him perhaps again to re-establish the splendour of his house—for him I commit them to your care. Leave no means
untried

untried to discover the place of his abode—promise me this—swear it !”

She held out her hand to them at once, to receive their oaths. William pressed it with firmness, but his friend was deprived of his consciousness when her fingers touched him. He trembled and hesitated. Had Babet been vain or suspicious, she would have known him to be a lover, or suspected him to be a knave.—She continued with composure :

“ If all your pains and enquiries are in vain, if my Philip has likewise gone before me, I bequeath this casket to you. Share its contents, be beneficent, and remember me !”

When William observed that she was silent, and fixed her tearful eyes upon the ground, he took the liberty to represent to her that she was still very young, and stood more in need of a provision

vision than a brother, who could every where obtain a subsistence in foreign military service. He entreated her to think of the desolation that now prevailed in the abode of her ancestors, he reminded her of the complaint of want which, but a few moments before, she had mentioned, and advised her to fly from a country where a villain might remain unpunished, but no nobleman could live in safety. "Such a flight," added he, "is difficult, and without money almost impossible."

Babet had listened to him with silence ; and with a sorrowful smile, "Yes," said she with a look of wild enthusiasm, "I will fly!—not fly—but depart in triumph—and that is possible—it is quite easy, without money.—You do not know," proceeded she with a secret horror, while her eye sparkled benignantly, "you know not, that in ten days I shall be
 .with

with my father !" She looked to heaven with reverential awe and devotion.

William asked her if she was ill, that she felt herself so near death ?

" O no !" replied she, " God deals very graciously with me ; he takes me out of this world without sickness." (She continued in a low and solemn voice) " In ten days, towards evening, a violent storm will take place ; the wicked men around shall tremble, but I shall rejoice. —Then will the lightning strike upon the turret which stands there by the water-side. I shall stand under the turret, and stretch out my hands. Then shall the angel of God descend from a cloud, and transport me to the eternal throne ; there shall I again behold my relations in glory !"

As she spoke this, she betrayed an enthusiastic rapture, and appeared herself to be transported with ecstacy. William gazed

gazed at her with astonishment, and began to think that her mind was disordered. He soon perceived that her monastic education and her early misfortunes had given her a tincture of superstitious enthusiasm. She told them, that after her father's death, deprived of her reason, she wandered through the grove day and night in wild despair, without sleep or refreshment. One morning she had sunk, exhausted, into a profound slumber, and in a dream God had revealed to her that her deliverance was at hand.

"Since that moment," pursued she, "I have been in full possession of my senses; my sorrow has become more placid. I have prepared a coffin to receive my body, and an angel is destined to receive my spirit. Congratulate me, the hour is not far distant!"

With secret compassion William listened to the visionary maid; Frederick turned

turned round, and dropped a silent tear. William was too well acquainted with mankind ^{not} to know that argument and reason would here be fruitless. He rather appeared to have no doubt of the prophetic dream. He put the casket in his pocket, and promised punctually to fulfill her commands. By degrees he endeavoured to awaken other images in her soul, to withdraw her attention from that single object on which she incessantly gazed. He continued to give the conversation a direction towards indifferent topics, and even to matters connected with Babet's family. He made her talk of her brothers, their person, their character, the regiments in which they had served, and the visits they had formerly paid her in the cloister.

From this he naturally passed to enquiries concerning the monastic system of education. He affected to be more unacquainted with it than he really was.

He .

He enquired after the mode of life, the plan of instruction, the connections and friendship to which such a scene gave rise.

At first Babet seemed to answer with reluctance; but, by degrees, so many scenes were recalled to her remembrance, so many youthful incidents occurred to her fancy, that at last, if she was not talkative, she took part in the conversation. She related many anecdotes; and, at last, she felt a pleasure in relating them. In a word, the charming vivacity which gradually displayed itself in her whole conduct, clearly showed that she was formed for cheerfulness, not for melancholy, and that solitary grief alone could have produced so violent an effect upon her temper.

She was astonished when morning dawned, was vexed at her dissipation, as she called it, bashfully apologized, and took her leave, to allow her guests to enjoy

enjoy repose. William threw himself on the straw. He soon dropped into a placid slumber, while Frederick paced through the cavern, standing still occasionally on the spot which Babet's foot had consecrated.

CHAP. VII.

THE RIGHTS OF NATURE.

IT has an hundred times been said that flattery is a poison. Well ! be it so ; but does it follow that it ought never to be employed ? Do not the physicians prescribe poisons for the most desperate diseases ?—Is not, for example, *Belladonna* considered an excellent remedy for a cancer ?—And is not a deep-rooted grief more dangerous than this cruel malady ?

Such were William's reflections when he awoke, after a few hours sleep ; and on them he formed the design to beguile the sorrow of his benefactress by well-directed flattery. Really there are no means so well calculated to withdraw men from serious or gloomy objects, as this balsam properly

properly applied. You must be careful, however, not to betray the design. It must not be a visible essence, it must be an invisible perfume. It must not descend in showers like the atmosphere of our earth, but, like that of the moon, it must distil in dew. Oh! there is not a sage in the universe who could withstand the effect of this soothing anodyne.

When Babet returned, about noon, and brought with her, for the entertainment of her guests, what nature in the ravaged garden still offered unsolicited, William began to play his part. He could not calculate indeed upon the assistance of his friend, for the man who truly loves cannot flatter. He summoned all his knowledge of the human heart, and all his experience. What he had often seen in the world, and had treated only with contempt, he now endeavoured to imitate. Pity and gratitude communicated an irresistible force

to his words, and an ardour before which Babet's coldness began to melt. Sometimes he was able to extort a smile from her; and when she detected herself in it, a stolen sigh seemed to ask forgiveness of her father's spirit. Before two hours had elapsed, William's flattering tongue had so far succeeded, that the lovely mourner sat down to table with her guests, and shared the fruits she had provided.

Day flew rapidly away. Babet with regret saw evening approach, for she had insensibly acquired a taste for society. Her eye often dwelt with particular complacency on William, who principally supported the conversation. His unembarrassed heart allowed him to display all his amiable qualities, while Frederick sat dreaming by his side, and, for fear of saying something silly, chose to be silent.

When the shades of night began to

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close

close round, Babet sent the girl and the footman out, different ways, to learn whether the tempest, which had raged so violently, was yet allayed. Both returned like Noah's pigeons with the olive-branch. However satisfactory this intelligence might be, it was received with welcome by nobody but William, who was extremely anxious to return to town, because he was afraid that he and his companion might be missed, and considered as deserters.

His friend was not at present affected by these considerations. He wished to see the villa as thickly surrounded by murderers, as the nightly traveller in some regions of Africa sees himself surrounded by moving fires, for he felt courage to defend Babet against a host; and he found that it was in such moments alone that he could testify to her his love. As no enemy, however, was to be seen, and as the fields were occupied only by crickets
and

and grasshoppers ; as the owls glided out and in through the broken windows of the mansion, the two friends prepared for their departure.

Babet was pensive and melancholy when they went away. She accompanied them to the iron gate, and gave them her hand as they took leave. " Providence above," said she, " has brought us together—be to me as brothers while I continue to sojourn here below.—It is but ten days to the wished for hour—visit your sister sometimes before she goes hence, provided you can do it without danger."

Frederick smiled at the word *danger*. William promised to come, were it even in *disguise*. Frederick smiled at the word *disguise*. He had kissed Babet's hand.—She had called him brother.—Where is the danger ?—Why disguise ?

They took their leave. Frederick often stopped to look back, though it

was quite dark. Babet stood at the gate, and listened to the footsteps of her guests, which sounded through the silent night. She then slowly returned.—She thought of going to the grotto, to her father's body, yet descended pensive to the cavern. She threw herself on the bed of straw, to meditate fully on her approaching death.

Since her acquaintance with William, this idea seemed to have acquired new charms, for with the solemn image of death she associated the agreeable picture of her new brother. She resolved, that upon the eventful day he should not leave her. She saw herself, struck lifeless by the lightning, sink into his arms—she thought how he would stretch her body tenderly upon the grass—how he would kneel beside her—A tear dropped from his eye on her cold hand—and at the thought her cheek glowed—he impresses a brother's kiss upon her pallid lips!

Thus

Thus were associated with the thoughts of death many delightful images, drawn by the pencil of purest innocence in the most pleasing colours. Death indeed still was in the perspective of the picture, but with a fainter light than the more captivating features. She expected, with a degree of impatience, a second visit from her guests. She no longer lay unconscious on her father's coffin, but sat upon it wistfully, and listened to the murmur of the waters which dashed on the banks of the little island. The nightingale sung in the grove, and she blamed herself because his melody gave her pleasure. The servant brought her a pigeon for dinner. She chid him for supposing she could be hungry; and when he was gone, she ate first one wing, then another, then the whole pigeon.

A soft and secret melancholy sometimes drove her from the grotto to the

house, from the windows of which she had a view of the road, both on the right and left. She walked up and down through the empty apartment, and sometimes threw a stolen glance on the shattered looking-glass.

Meanwhile, poor Frederick, ill at heart, stalked about like a spectre, and must have bled to death of the deep wound he had received, had not his friend, with unwearied attention, poured into it the balm of hope. As the words of his mistress are to a lover sacred as holy writ, Frederick, notwithstanding his excellent understanding, was not disinclined to believe that really in ten days a stroke of lightning would tear Babet from him; and William was obliged to laugh him out of this conceit, since to reason him out of it was impossible.

Even although, perhaps, Babet should be saved from the dreaded lightning,
 would

would she be disposed to forget her grief in his arms? The hope appeared too bold, for true love would make even a Narcissus modest! William, who coolly considered the situation of affairs, endeavoured to remove every doubt, and to convince the timid lover that Babet's youthful innocence, her destitute situation, and the unoccupied state of her heart, would enable him to secure her affection. He encouraged him, at least, to make his eyes the interpreters of his heart, and not to appear ever before her with downcast looks. Frederick promised every thing, but did not keep his word; for first love embarrasses every motion, because it is ever fearful to offend.

They received a very agreeable piece of intelligence on their return to town. The persons who had cut down the tree of liberty had been taken in another village, and condemned to an ignominious

punishment. The two friends, therefore, were enabled, without danger, to continue their little excursions, and Frederick wished to avail himself of this liberty, though a circumstance in itself very indifferent, to prevail upon William to pay Babet a second visit the following day. William, however, more cool than his friend, was afraid that the enthusiastic girl might be displeased, and thought it better to wait till the day after.

Frederick cursed the coldness of his companion, stood the whole day cheerless at the window, and wondered to see the people pursuing their occupations so coolly. When it was scarce midnight, he roused William, who lay fast asleep, and maintained that it was already day-break. It was but the declining moon, which shot a feeble ray into their apartment.

At last the eastern horizon was overspread with purple clouds, and before the
first

first rays of the sun peeped through the grey twilight the two friends were already in the street. The doors were all shut, and their footsteps alone resounded along the empty pavement. They had this time loaded their pockets with all kinds of provisions, and hoped to prevail upon their benefactress to partake of a frugal meal. William meditated, as he walked along, how he should tempt her from the gloomy grotto, where the terrific objects it contained furnished fresh food for her grief. His care, however, was unnecessary ; for when the travellers arrived at the iron gate they saw Babet sitting under a lime-tree on the lawn, feeding her two hens with crumbs of bread.

The lovely creature blushed modestly, and bade them kindly welcome. William secretly made the agreeable remark that her hair was dressed with some degree of care, and that her bosom was

more studiously covered than it was the first time they saw her.

They all sat down under the lime-tree. The conversation of the little circle, indeed, was constrained. They seemed to be afraid to display any symptoms of joy. The lovely dreamer was somewhat hurt to perceive that all allusion to her affliction was carefully avoided, and she herself likewise forbore to mention it. William exerted every effort in his power to animate the conversation, and he sometimes succeeded. Babet appeared to feel his anxiety with gratitude, and repaid his exertions by many kind looks. In a word, her natural feeling for the pleasures of life awoke. She again resumed an interest in what passed around her. Of Frederick's love, however, she entertained no suspicion. A more experienced girl would have guessed, from his vacant stare, his embarrassment when she spoke to him, the

blush upon his cheeks when her eye met his, what passed in his heart. But Babet, educated in the seclusion of a cloister, never suspected the power of her charms.

The day passed in the utmost harmony. Babet led her guests through the fields, the meadows, and gardens, pointed out and described to them all its former beauties, every place that was now destroyed. She dwelt with a melancholy pleasure on every spot which had been the favourite of her father, and said, that if she were not so well convinced of her speedy death, she could not endure the melancholy prospect of these scenes, but would fly from her country.

William seized this opportunity to descant on the charms of his native land, and to declare with what cordial welcome she would there be received. He lamented that fate denied him the pleasure of being her deliverer. He ven-

tured even to express the wish that his prayers might avert the fatal lightning.

He then watched her countenance unobserved, to see whether she betrayed any dislike at such an idea ; and he had the satisfaction to perceive that, though she was silent, her downcast looks testified seriousness, not displeasure. Contented with his first success, he broke off the conversation, and left to her own imagination to complete the sketch in solitude.

When evening began to spread its shades the party separated, with the promise of seeing each other daily till the fatal hour arrived. Poor Frederick's heart was more deeply pierced than ever, for Babet, in a few hours, with sisterly solicitude developed the whole charms of her soul ; and an innocence, which Geffner's pencil alone could portray, diffused round her personal charms the glory of an angel.

William's

William's hopes were now sanguine. He calculated upon still more decisive effects from his exertions during the nine days which remained. Babet flew to the grotto—for the first time she found it inspire her with a degree of horror.—She was astonished to feel a secret disgust—and returned in deep meditation to the lime-tree.

CHAP. VIII.

THE SPECTRE.

REVIEWERS and undertakers resemble each other in this, that they both perform their respective functions for hire; the latter are paid to mourn, the former to abuse. Both of them are engaged indeed in precisely the same occupation, that of making hired criticisms, the latter upon men who are carried to the grave; the former upon books, which people are at perfect liberty, if they please, to carry to the same place.

Should any body observe that this remark is very unseasonable upon the present occasion, I have two answers ready. First, I follow the example of Cato, who, whatever subject might have been discussed in the senate, always concluded his speech with: *Cæterum puto Carthaginem esse*

esse delendam ; and the authority of this great example must be the more conclusive for my justification, as the republic of letters would evidently gain a great deal more by the extermination of Reviewers than Rome could do by the destruction of Carthage.

Secondly, this remark is not quite so foreign from the purpose as on the first glance might be imagined ; for this true history now is at that very period which gives the Prometheuses among the reviewers an opportunity to surpass the work of the gods. Babet, will they say, the rapt enthusiast, that scarce seemed to touch the earth, now too easily admits of consolation, and forgets the murder of her father and brothers, as soon as if merely her lap-dog had torn her handkerchief. *There is no consistency in the character !*

Very well, gentlemen ! It is a pity, however, that mother Nature cares as
little

little for your sage rules as a lambkin in the meads would care for a dancing-master, who should prescribe how he ought to skip. The celebrated Mr. *Huber* (I had almost forgot to add, author of the *Secret Tribunal*) somewhere observes, that " Brutus is the most consistent character in the history of the world." Although such a remark is advanced only because it sounds extraordinary, it follows, from this hyper-critic's own confession, that there are very few consistent characters in the history of the world. The author of the world, we all know, is dame Nature ; and if she exhausted her powers on Brutus, Babet may justly hope to be forgiven.

We candidly acknowledge, therefore, that the good young lady, in consequence of the repeated visits of her new brothers, discovered in the last ten days of her life a quite different temper of mind from that which she had displayed

played when she rejected the casket, with contempt of all terrestrial things. She was now attached to life by secret wishes.

Three days had Babet, according to her calculation, still to live. On the first she confessed that she had too precipitately prayed for death ; on the second she even ventured to think that God too hastily had granted her prayer ; and on the third she trembled for the succeeding morn.

As soon as William observed this favourable disposition, he began to suggest doubts of the fulfilment of the prophetic dream. He repeated a number of examples of dreams which had never been fulfilled. He explained as well as he could (for who can perfectly explain it ?) the effect of the state of the blood, or excessive agitation of the corporeal organs, upon the mind of the sleeper. Babet did not understand him ; but she listened
with

with respect, and secretly wished he might be right.

She had insensibly conceived a strong attachment to William ; with this attachment was connected a sisterly confidence, and in their walks she clung to his side with as little constraint as if he had been one of the nuns with whom she used to walk in the gardens of the convent. Frederick, on the contrary, seemed only the moon, which borrowed a feeble ray from the friendly sun. She esteemed him likewise, but it was more with a feeling of friendship. How could it be otherwise ? Love had veiled all his splendid and amiable qualities in the mist of reserve.

When, on the evening before the awful day, they separated with beating hearts, the lovely Babet, with trembling voice, entreated her friends to return very early next day, that she might not be utterly deserted in her last hour.

William

William promised for both ; and as the sultry evening really portended a storm, they scarce went an hundred yards from Babet's house, to be nearer at hand, and took up their lodgings at an inn.

A lover, as all the world knows, is ever in extremes. He is in raptures or in despair ; he is dumb or talkative ; and when in the humour to speak, his subject is so inexhaustible, that he commonly spares the hearer the trouble of an answer, and a tree or a man, therefore, are often equally his confidants. That Frederick, in the silence of night, in the sleepless hours, should dwell upon the charms of his beloved ; that he should descant with all his eloquence on Babet's beauty and innocence, was quite as natural as that William, who could hope to hear nothing new on this subject, should fall asleep. Receiving no answer to his questions, and hearing his companion breathe louder than before,

fore, the orator at length perceived that he was uttering his complaints to the bare walls. He was unwilling to disturb his friend's slumber ; he rose, went out, and groped his way in the dark along the road.

As during the last ten days he had formed an acquaintance with every stone and tree which stood or lay in the road to Babet's house, it was not difficult for him, in spite of the darkness which surrounded him, to find the well-known path to the abode of his beloved, without stumbling or knocking his head against a post. He arrived safe at the iron gate, and through the rails contemplated with sighs the broken windows, from which a solitary lamp shed a feeble light. He walked backwards and forwards, breathed lengthened sighs, and in the silence of night repeated, sometimes aloud sometimes in a low voice, the name of Babet.

Alas! he knew not what agonising tortures

tures he had occasioned his beloved by this nocturnal excursion. The timorous maiden had stood at the window ever since her friends had left her, gazing at the gloomy clouds which gathered in the west, and seemed to carry in their bosom the arrow of death. The distant lightning increased her apprehension—her heart trembled as often as the flash burst from the cloud !

But what were her feelings when, by this horrid light, she suddenly saw a figure walking backward and forward at the iron gate!—when she heard profound sighs, and distinctly heard her name pronounced !

My father's ghost !—The idea struck horror through her whole frame, and her teeth chattered.—“ The ghost of my father summons me hence !—My dream was no idle phantom of the brain !—My last hour approaches !—The spirits of the dead are ready to receive me !”

She

She dropped down upon her knees, and attempted to pray; but she fell senseless upon the floor. Frederick, unconscious of the mischief he had done, had now finished his romantic excursion; for the light streaks which appeared in the east announced the coming day. He returned, and awaked his friend. With the first dawn of morning they were at the door.

They ascended the stair without noise, and found the servants still buried in sleep. They imagined that Babet was likewise in bed. William opened the door of her room as carefully as a mother who is fearful of disturbing the slumbers of her sick child. Frederick stood behind him, and threw a timid glance over his shoulders. The maid lay stretched upon the floor.

“She is asleep,” whispered William, and was about to retire. But Frederick, with ill presaging alarm, advanced nearer,
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er, took her hand, found it cold as clay, and screamed : “ She is dead !—The terrors of imagination have killed her !” William endeavoured, without success, to moderate the transports of his grief. He ran through the room like a person frantic, and exclaimed in agonizing despair : “ She is gone !—Is there now a compassionate thunderbolt reserved for me !” With wild cries he threw himself on the supposed corpse—with frantic grief he sprang up to look for some weapon to put an end to his miserable existence. William begged and threatened—sometimes with tenderness, sometimes with anger—in vain ! Frederick heard him not—till at last his friend seized him forcibly in his arms, and shouted in his ear : “ Man ! are you mad ?—She is not dead !—her heart beats still !”

Frederick now threw himself down transported beside his beloved, laid his trembling hand upon her heart, felt it beat,

beat, and to the most violent grief succeeded the most immoderate expressions of joy. He pressed William to his breast—embraced the old footman—he wept, and shouted. He never thought of applying the proper means to recover her from the swoon—it was enough that she was alive—her heart beat, he thanked heaven with enthusiasm !

Meanwhile, William had roused the servant. Cold spring water was the only cordial with which she could supply him. He sprinkled Babet's face, rubbed her arms and temples, and in a few minutes she opened her eyes.

She looked round wildly, and eagerly pressed William's hand. " I thank you," said she, " for having come so early.—Soon, very soon, and my death-hour knells." William led her to the window, pointed out to her the beauties of the blushing morn, remarked how the black clouds dispersed, how the thick
mist

mist formed an ocean in the valley, all indications of a pleasant day. The blushing morn, however, had no charms for Babet. Her eye gazed wildly at the iron gate—there was the place where the spectre stalked—thence issued the dismal groans—thence it had called the name of Babet. In vain did William endeavour to amuse her mind, and to withdraw her attention from the object on which it dwelt. “Leave me,” said she, “I must die—too sure this day I die.—My father’s ghost has appeared to me—his warning summons has roused me from my sinful hopes.—I go to prepare for death.”

Without farther explanation respecting the nature of the apparition, she retired into an adjoining room to pray. Astonished and chagrined, William looked at her, and cur’d the demon that, with some new phantasy of a disordered imagination, had blasted the fruits of his

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exertions. In vain the two friends endeavoured to gather from the domestics, whether, since last night, any thing extraordinary had occurred. They knew of nothing. Babet had ordered them to go to bed, and they obeyed without opposition, for it was no new thing for their mistress not to undress at all. William could now no longer conceal the impression which the circumstance made upon his mind. He dreaded not indeed any miracle of nature ; but he dreaded the wonderful effects of imagination, which, so often governed by phantoms of its own creation, silences the feeble voice of reason. In a word, he dreaded not Babet's death, but, what is worse than death—madness. He endeavoured, as well as he could, to conceal these melancholy thoughts from his friend, who walked about with tottering steps and folded hands, in visible agitation. Sometimes he stood gazing at the
 door

door through which she had disappeared. Sometimes he stopped short, looked at him wistfully, as if to seek consolation in his eye.

After the lapse of an hour Babet returned to the room, and a supernatural serenity sat majestic upon her brow. She spoke little, answered shortly, and seemed afraid to drop a single word that could indicate a doubt of her approaching death—as if she feared to lose that composure and resignation she had prayed from heaven.

The conversation was very constrained. Of dreams, apparitions, and dying, the brothers would not talk, and the sister would hear of nothing else. They walked up and down together, almost in silence. From Frederick's breast heaved long heavy sighs, as if he himself had been condemned to die. Babet walked about in still meditation, not a breath, not a footstep was heard.—Spirits skim

along the earth—and Babet was already almost disembodied.

William, from time to time, went to the window, and failed not always to observe, that the morning was delightful and serene, that not a threatening cloud hung on the horizon. The visionary maid, however, heard his remarks with indifference, for the voice of the spectre still vibrated in her ear.

CHAP. IX.

THE STORM.

WHEN the sun had advanced far towards the meridian, and an oppressive heat announced the highest influence of his reign ; when his burning rays penetrated through the unshaded windows into the apartment, Babet herself proposed a walk in the grove. It was not, indeed, in order to refresh herself in the cooling shade ; for she would have been ashamed, when at the very verge of the world of spirits, to have expressed any corporeal inconvenience. She wished unobserved to approach the turret which her dream had pointed out as the termination of her pilgrimage, and the humanity which still adhered to her taught her the tender delicacy of concealing

this circumstance from her anxious friends.

William seized the proffered plan of amusement, slight as it was. They went out; and the good-hearted William, whose suspicions had wandered into a wrong track, studiously endeavoured to conduct her far from the little island and the hideous grotto. Babet observed it, and said with a smile: "Why this anxiety?—Why should I now wish to visit the melancholy remains of my father, since in a few hours I shall see him in glory?"

William sighed softly at her invincible credulity, and Frederick sorrowfully broke the twigs as he passed along from every bush. At last the sultry noon-day heat compelled them to seek the most shady place of the grove, where a gravel foot-path led to a solitary hermitage, which received only a feeble light through

through a little window, round which ivy and wild hops were entwined.

Here a mossy bank invited them to rest from their fatigue. Babet seated herself between her two brothers; and William, who found that it was important to talk, be the subject what it might, in order to divert the attention of the visionary, took up the most indifferent topics. He descanted upon the beauty of the butterfly, and the industry of the ant. At last, a coat of arms, which was painted on one of the panes, afforded matter for a long and interesting conversation. Among many other useless things, Babet in the cloister had likewise learnt heraldry. The artful William, who really understood little of the subject, affected to be more ignorant than he really was, and with exemplary patience led her to explain all the mummery of crests, supporters, &c. When upon a critical occasion it is important

to withdraw the mind from some ruling object, the most trifling means are not to be despised, since by the association of ideas they awaken they produce the happiest effects. Babet exhausted the science she had acquired in the cloister on the arms of her female friends, whose images recurred to her mind as she dwelt upon topics with which they were connected, or renewed the faded recollection of past scenes. Insensibly the subject withdrew her from the gloomy contemplation of death. Who knows how far William might have succeeded, for two hours had thus elapsed, when suddenly the noise of the distant thunder struck alarm into the little party!

Babet grew pale—the blood forsook Frederick's cheeks—even William was disconcerted, and secretly repined at fortune, which seemed resolved still farther to prove the poor superstitious maid. All three sprang up, and hastened

tened to the door. The horizon was overcast, the wind howled through the trees, the croaking ravens flew to their nests, and the birds fluttered about in alarm.

Babet folded her trembling hands :
 "Follow me !" said she with faltering voice ; "leave me not !"

Frederick was so confounded and agitated by what he saw, and what he felt, that he knew not what he did. "Would to God !" said he as he seized Babet's hand, and pressed it eagerly, "would to God I could die with you !" — She started, and gazed at him wildly. She then gently disengaged herself, and flew so rapidly through the thick bushes, that the two friends could hardly follow her. The storm approached nearer and nearer, the big drops fell, the wind whistled, and the rustling leaves were shaken from the trees.

Breathless ran Babet through a mea-

dow, which the river formed into a peninsula, at the extremity of which stood the ruins of the old tower, under the nodding walls of which she resolved to bury herself. William followed her close, and overtook her just as she sunk down exhausted upon a stone, and stretched out her arms to Heaven to receive the angel of death.

Her brothers kneeled by her side. With terror and the agitation of her rapid race her breast was like to burst. William looked round, and perceived that in this dangerous situation accident might very easily realise Babet's prophetic dream; for the turret was surrounded by tall oaks, whose tops defied the tempest, and seemed boldly to tempt the lightning down. But it would have been in vain to mention this danger. The luckless Babet was already almost in the agonies of death.

The black cloud hung directly over
 I their

their head—the thunder pealed tremendous—the lightning darted quicker and more vivid—the wind suddenly died away—the rain ceased—a fullen silence reigned over the fullen landscape—a sultry breeze tainted every flower—death seemed to hang the threatening clouds in massy chains over their heads—Babet breathed languid—the lustre of her eye was faded—Hark! the lightning crashes upon the turret, shivers the wall, the ruins roll into the river, and the earth trembles.

“*Jesu Maria!*” cried a voice from the midst of the ruins.—Babet lay lifeless on the ground—the hail descended in torrents—Frederick was motionless—William lifted Babet, who lay senseless, covered her with his great-coat, and turned towards the ruins, from whence the voice had issued. He saw, and shuddered.—Through the gaping wall, between stones which still separated and

tumbled down, appeared the figure of a young man as if rising out of the grave. Pale and haggard, covered only with a few rags, he gazed wildly at the strangers, and advanced in silence like a spectre.

“Who art thou?” cried William. The spectre answered not. The rain beat on his uncovered head; he visibly trembled, and endeavoured to hide his naked limbs. Roused by William’s summons, his friend turned round, and gazed at the figure, which inspired a mingled feeling of compassion and fear. He sprang up, advanced hastily towards the apparition, and cried in a rougher voice: “Who are you? What do you want?”

“Spare me!” said the young man with trembling voice; “you see that God has now spared me.—I beheld from the turret how you kneeled by the side of this virtuous maid.—Happy for me that you
prize

prize her so much ! My Babet will pray for me !”

“ *Your Babet ?*” cried Frederick starting back, and eyeing the figure with doubtful penetrating looks, and reluctantly perceived in him a handsome young man, whom want and misery had worn to the bone.

“ *Your Babet !*” repeated William with curiosity.

“ *My Babet !*” said the young man somewhat more firmly, and advanced uninterrupted to the lifeless maid, knelt beside her, and endeavoured to warm her cold hands between his. Frederick stood gazing speechless—an indignant feeling darted through his heart. He felt as if the odious wish arose in his mind that Babet might never awake.

Meanwhile the stormy clouds had spent their fury, the thunder now rolled at a greater distance, a soft shower revived the earth, the flowers again reared their

their heads, the birds began to twitter; with the birds and the flowers Babet also awoke, and found herself—in the arms of her brother.

His countenance was the first object which met her half-opened eyes; it was not extraordinary, therefore, that her imagination, assailed by dreams and by realities, should fancy that she awoke in Elysium. She thought herself deceased, and transported to the abodes of the blessed.

“ My brother Philip !” said she in feeble accents, “ has death again united us ? — Where is our father ? — Why comes he not to receive his daughter ?”

When he heard the unsuspecting name of brother, peace returned to Frederick’s breast. The youth, against whom he thought he had felt an emotion of hatred, suddenly became dear to him—he was Babet’s brother !

It was a long time before Babet could
persuade

persuade herself that she was really alive; the supposed spirit of her brother before her supported the deception, which was not in any degree removed by the presence of her friends, for she believed that they too had been killed by the lightning. The youth, by lengthened misery and continual danger, from which he had not yet escaped, was weakened both in mind and body; he still considered the strangers as pursuers, who thirsted for his blood. In Frederick's bosom, joy on Babet's recovery struggled with the apprehension of what might be the consequence of her having found a brother, who might perhaps disapprove his love. These doubts kept him pensive and silent.

William was the only one who, in a few minutes, recovered his presence of mind. He observed that this place, drenched with rain, and the melancholy prospect of the ruins, was not calculated
for

for receiving mutual explanations. He made a sign to his friend to lead the exhausted Babet home, while he himself supported her tottering brother. The way was long through the dripping grove. Whenever a drop from the branches fell upon Babet's hand or cheeks, the poor maid started, and gazed at every tree or bush with a certain vacant smile, which shewed how feebly her reason yet struggled with the delusions of imagination.

Frederick's eyes hung upon her with anxious solicitude; her arm lay in his; he trembled like the aspen-tree, whose overhanging leaves cooled the glow of his cheeks; it was the most painful journey he had ever performed. He thought he should never be able to reach its termination; he looked towards the house, and yet wished that it were miles distant.

William was examined with keenness
and

and apprehension by his haggard companion. The nearer they approached the mansion-house, the more his hollow eye testified suspicion and uneasiness. Often he was on the point of running away, and probably he would have yielded to this impulse had he felt himself strong enough to escape from two vigorous pursuers. He trembled as he entered the house, and his confidence did not return till on the stair he met the faithful old footman, who threw himself at his feet with shouts of joy.

They at last reached Babet's apartment, where the brother and sister viewed every thing around them with looks of wildness and surprise. William prescribed for them refreshment and repose, medicines of powerful virtue even for diseased minds.

CHAP. X.

THE SEPARATION.

CHEVALIER BELLOY, the same whom his sister imagined to be on his way to America, had seen his father and brother murdered by his side, and had withdrawn himself from the fury of his persecutors by taking an asylum among some inaccessible ruins, which in the amusements of his boyish days had been thoroughly explored, and were perfectly familiar to him. Here he ventured for many weeks only to creep out with the owls, to gather wild roots and fruits for his subsistence. At first he supposed that the whole mansion was destroyed, and that his sister too had fallen a prey to the rage of his sanguinary persecutors, till one day, through the chink of his retreat,

retreat, he saw her in deep sorrow walking at the foot of the tower.

He was on the point of running down to throw himself in her arms, when he was deterred by a dread of the loud expressions of her sudden joy. He did not know who might be in the neighbourhood; whether she might not be a prisoner. Had he not reason to dread spies and ambush in every thicket?—The sorrowful Babet again retired from the tower; and though in a few days after want and affection had overcome all his scruples, and he was determined to come forth in spite of every danger, the lovely form never again appeared to his view.

At last, when he had no longer any means of supporting his existence, he resolved in despair to quit his retreat, and again throw himself in his sister's arms, or expose himself to the daggers of his blood-thirsty murderers. He had for
this

this purpose fixed upon the day when the roots he had collected by moonlight were exhausted, and he had no longer any means of supporting his wretched existence.

This, however, was the very day when our fugitives had been driven into the grotto by the wild rabble, who filled the garden, the grove, and the whole neighbourhood with their frantic shouts. Philip thought he was betrayed, that this careful search, this roar of the wild beasts for prey was directed against him. More than once, indeed, the tower had been surrounded by the raging mob; the boldest of them ventured into the tower, and clambered over the moss-grown ruins. As the only access to Philip's retreat was by a small opening, before which he had piled up the stones in artful disorder, he escaped their search.

As, however, nothing appeared more certain than that he was the object of
their

their pursuit, his fears were redoubled, and in the first days which succeeded this incident he did not even trust his life to the friendly darkness of night, but resigned himself a prey to the most pressing hunger and thirst, till he was almost too much reduced to be able to quit the place of his retreat.

Meanwhile he sometimes saw his sister in the neighbourhood of the tower, and rejoiced to see her safe. Now, however, she appeared to be attended by two strangers, whose suspicious presence prevented him from discovering himself, more especially as the deep grief which Babet's features bore gave him reason to apprehend that her attendants were not friends but guards.

When first in the obscurity of night he ventured out to allay his thirst in a neighbouring pond, despair drove him into the court of his father's house ; and had he found the door open, he would
in

in spite of all danger have penetrated to his sister's chamber; but all was fast. Should he make a noise, should he knock at the door, must he not meet the suspicious strangers whom he daily saw wandering in the garden? Irresolute he walked about, till the first cock-crow chased him back to his ruins.

Yet longer to endure this accumulation of misery was beyond the strength of a young man reared in the lap of prosperity, on whom every joy of life had shed its gentlest influence, and whom the winds of Heaven had never visited too roughly. Want and despair unfolded that courage which effeminacy and profusion had weakened; for all our virtues and vices are the offspring of natural or artificial wants. He had formed an irrevocable determination the ensuing night to force his way into his father's house, and, if it was possessed by murderers, to die in his sister's arms.

The

The tempest anticipated the execution of his design, sprang open his dungeon, and accidentally threw him into the hands of friends.

Such was the story which he communicated when refreshment had recovered him from the first stupefaction of returning sensibility. The discovery that William and Frederick were prisoners of war inspired him with confidence. Their blue coats, which he had hitherto mistaken for the uniform of the national guard, he no longer viewed with abhorrence. These men had fought for *his* rights; they were of *his* political faith, and could not betray him. When similar necessities and similar principles form a point of union among men, the most suspicious souls soon cordially fraternise.

The clouds which had obscured Babet's mind now began to disperse. She felt that she was alive, and appeared to be pleased at the feeling. William,
who

who anxiously observed every change of her countenance, now ventured more directly to pronounce the prophetic dream to be a delusion of the imagination; and to refute his opinion, she recapitulated the story of the apparition of her father, and the awful summons, with the minutest circumstances. When she led her friends to the window, to show them the place at the gate where the spectre had walked and sighed, Frederick blushed, and stammered out the confession, that he was the figure which had occasioned her so much uneasiness, and he respectfully begged her forgiveness for having sighed so loud.

Babet's joy at this discovery served to conceal the ingenuous shame which glowed in her cheeks, on hearing Frederick's confession. His romantic nocturnal excursion recalled to her mind the uncommon eagerness with which, at the door of the hermitage, he had expressed

expressed the wish that he might die with her. Inexperienced as she was in the tender passion, she yet would have sworn that this was love—and the roses on her cheeks changed into the deepest scarlet.

Philip, who had long known that passion, guessed what passed in the heart of the stranger. The conquest his sister had made seemed to give him pleasure, as in his own destitute and unsettled situation he was unable to afford her protection ; and he rejoiced at the prospect of her honour being secured, in a union with a man of worth. That the modest, backward Frederick was no seducer his own experience convinced him, for at the first glance he discovered a man unhackneyed in the ways of vice. The same evening, too, William completely removed every doubt, by availing himself of a favourable opportunity

to acquaint him with the pure and honourable passion of his friend.

“Is he a nobleman?” was the only question which the prejudices of this Frenchman of the old school suggested; and when William, by an evasion, had satisfied him upon that subject, he joyfully gave his consent to the proposal, that, as soon as an exchange of prisoners took place, Babet should accompany Frederick as his bride.

The bashful lover meanwhile had remained alone with the object of his wishes, but his courage had ceased with the tempest. He allowed the favourable opportunity of completing in the evening what he had begun in the morning, to escape. They both sat in profound silence—both fixed their eyes on the ground—Frederick because he had already said too much, and Babet because she had heard too much to remain longer

longer doubtful of the situation of his heart.~

In the delightful feeling of having escaped the dangers by which they were threatened, the little party spent, in friendly confidence and harmony, the remainder of a day which had begun with such unfavourable auspices. They now began to consult what was to be done with Philip. Babet insisted that he should take refuge in the inaccessible cavern till the republican tempest had spent its fury. Even Philip himself was at first inclined to this proposal. When he was informed, however, of the treasure which had been found, and saw the casket full of diamonds, with the value of which he acquainted the inexperienced company, he suddenly changed his resolution.

He was too generous, indeed, or rather too thoughtless, notwithstanding Babet's entreaties, to take more than a

small proportion of his father's bequest. He would not, as he said, diminish the little dowry of his sister, as the three rings which he appropriated to himself were fully sufficient to carry him out of the territories of France. He then proposed to equip himself in a manner suitable to his rank, hasten to the army of the Prince of Condé, and never again set his foot on the soil of his ungrateful country, till he came back to reclaim his paternal inheritance with armed hand. "Thy fate, my dear Babet," said he with a significant smile, "I commit to these brave men. They are noblemen, they are soldiers, and I rely upon them with confidence. To them I transfer the father's authority and the brother's duties, which fortune now denies me an opportunity to exercise. Under their protection leave this desolate mansion, as soon as they invite you to fly to a more safe and agreeable retreat."

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In vain Babet laboured to prevail upon him to prefer the security of the cavern to an unsafe flight ; in vain she offered, since he was not to be diverted from his resolution, to accompany him and share every danger. He urged so many plausible and powerful reasons against this proposal, and William, although he did not altogether approve the thoughtlessness with which the Chevalier entrusted the happiness of his sister in the hands of men whom he had never before seen, supported him so ably, that Babet was at last obliged to yield.

The old servant procured his young master the dress of a peasant. They cut off his hair, changed his fair complexion into a sun-burnt olive, and equipped in large wooden shoes, accompanied by the faithful old footman, who knew every bye road and footpath, the inconsiderate youth at midnight took leave of his

weeping sister. He first took the road to Montauban, where he expected the assistance of a steady friend to enable him to proceed on his journey.

After his departure, the little society he had left behind lived more than a month in great concord and tranquillity. Frederick enjoyed many delightful hours, but it was only in seeing his beloved ; for as often as William either seriously or with raillery reproached him with his timidity, and often as he himself formed the heroic resolution this day to open his heart, and to entreat from Babet's lips the decision of his fate, yet he continued to return at night to town as undecided as he had come, and communicated only to the trees the secret which he ought to have confided to the ear of his mistress.—We can indeed offer but one apology for this conduct. Babet carefully avoided being alone with him,

him, and a declaration of love, even in presence of the best friend, is, God knows why, a very unpleasant task.

Matters, however, could not long remain in this state. It was improper that a young lady of sixteen should receive daily visits from two young officers. In the present situation of the country, indeed, nobody paid any attention to their conduct, and the new marriage code justified many things which formerly would have attracted censure. But Babet herself felt the doubtful nature of her situation, her tender sensibility revolted at it, and her helplessness alone led her to suppress the dictates of her trembling delicacy. To this likewise was added, the general report of a speedy exchange of prisoners, an event which might daily take place. A sudden departure then must render the favourable issue of Frederick's declaration still more doubtful ; for experience tells

us, that it is easier to obtain a lady's consent, when there is the prospect of a long courtship, and when she has time to think of her new situation. Precipitation might ruin all.

This and much more did William daily urge to his bashful friend ; nor was Frederick insensible of the justice of his remonstrances, but he wanted courage to obey his own conviction. One day, as they were walking slowly home in the dusk of the evening, William bethought himself of endeavouring to give new effect to his solicitations, by suggesting something, the mere possibility of which is sufficient to drive a lover to despair. " What," said he, " if by your procrastination the chastity and innocence of your mistress should be exposed to danger ? What, if a horde of frantic persons, hurried on by some criminal ebullition—a circumstance indeed which cannot be foreseen, but which, in the present frenzy

frenzy of the people, may always be apprehended—should again burst into Babet's house?—The first time, the ghastly sight of her father's corpse allayed their fury, but what now will protect her from their brutal outrage?"

Frederick stopped, stared wildly round, and trembled.

"Who," proceeded William, "who will answer that even now, while we are walking quietly here—"

"For heaven's sake, no more!" cried Frederick with trembling lips, "you have succeeded, here is my hand.—Sure as these planets revolve over our heads—sure as God is enthroned above these planets, to-morrow shall I tell her all!"

William received the hand and promise of his friend. In order to facilitate this bold attempt, he resolved to remain at home next day, under pretence of indisposition. Frederick hurried on before him, immersed in thought. He

imagined himself at the feet of his mistress, sought words to express his passion, and found that either Babet's language was poor of expression, or he had made but little proficiency in the French tongue.

Scarcely had they reached their habitation, scarcely had William dropped into his first slumber, and Frederick had resigned himself to the sweet dreams of love, when a violent knocking was heard at the door, which was opened by the landlord. A band of men burst violently into the house, and a file of troops entered the room. William started from his sleep, rubbed his eyes, and asked what was the matter. An officer of the national guard, who was by trade a butcher, told him roughly, that the number of prisoners of war in this little town was by far too great; that symptoms of disorder had been observed, and the municipality had therefore thought proper

per to transfer the half of their guests to the next department. Lieutenant Perlstadt was among the latter, and therefore he would be so good as to follow him immediately.

Frederick was confounded. William collected himself, and expressed a hope that at least they would not separate him from his friend, but send them together to the same place.

“To separate such friendship,” pursued the officer bluntly, “is the very object the municipality have in view.” He begged them to make haste, as he had many other prisoners to call out of their beds. “On account of the temper of the people,” added he, “who hate all foreigners, you may consider yourselves indebted to the magistrates for giving orders that you should be sent out of the town by night.”

William easily saw that all kind of opposition would here be fruitless. Frederick

was too much stupefied by the order to be able to make any preparation for his departure. William packed up the few necessaries which belonged to his friend, and whispered in his ear: "Be easy! I will speak to Babet to-morrow upon your affair."

Frederick embraced William, and took leave in silence.—Silently he walked along the streets, surrounded by grenadiers. At the gate he found the troop of his companions already assembled; he joined them without saying a word, and a sigh first relieved the oppression of his breast, when, in the stillness of night, the detachment filed past Babet's house.

CHAP. XI.

THE FEVER.

THE lovely mourner did not hear with perfect indifference of the departure of her lover. Besides that a young man who dotes upon a woman with his whole soul must ever have a claim to some consideration, even with the most inflexible beauty, Babet really felt a cordial regard for Frederick; and who knows how far this feeling which she indulged without distrust might have carried her, had not William's presence, unconsciously to both of them, extinguished every softer emotion for his friend?

The sorrow she felt at Frederick's departure was rather sympathy with William's grief; nay, we must confess that
this

this feeling was instantly blended with a sensation of secret joy, because in future she should enjoy William's company without the constraint which the penetrating eye of a lover imposed. Yet let it not be supposed that her mind distinctly avowed this thought. No; it was only an obscure feeling which she never properly explained to herself, and which, perhaps, she did not exactly understand.

With the most childish unembarrassment she laid her hand in his during their walks, or she clung to him when the cold harvest wind rustled through the trees; or she would allow him to carry her over a ditch; or eagerly snatched the glass from his hand when he was over-heated, and was about to swallow a hasty draught.—In a word, she gave him involuntarily so many proofs of her innocent attachment, and the sparks of love diffused so many new charms over her

her enchanting form, that it required the infinite affection he bore Jeanette, and the pure friendship he entertained for Frederick, to enable him to avoid the dangerous influence of a passion, which it would have been criminal to indulge.

Never, perhaps, had his constancy sustained a severer trial. Better acquainted than Babet with the wanderings of the human heart, he ventured to examine the state of his feelings; he could not but perceive that the beauty and innocence of this maid powerfully interested him, he trembled when he contemplated the precipice on which he stood, and resolved, the better to avoid the danger, to hasten the discovery which he had promised to communicate of his friend's attachment.

He was not deterred from the performance of his promise by observing
that

that Babet avoided all conversation upon this subject ; that she endeavoured to interrupt what she could not altogether shun. He declared to her with warmth and importunity, that it was in her power to make his friend happy, and at the same time to confer the greatest happiness upon himself. Babet had but one answer to all that William urged so eloquently in favour of the absent lover.

“ But do I love him ?” said she blushing, while she peeped through the veil over her long filken eye-lashes. “ But do I love him ?” repeated she with glowing cheeks, as she darted a glance at the more fortunate advocate, which told him what he durst not suppose. In a word, the suitor was obliged to content himself with the equivocal answer : “ that she would leave her resolution to be formed by time ; that she would not studiously resist his wishes, but would candidly

candidly acknowledge whenever she began to feel any thing more for Frederick than esteem."

His absence, while William was daily with her, was not very well calculated indeed to effect so favourable an alteration. And why then did not William modestly decline his visits, when he but too distinctly perceived that his intercourse with Babet would be fatal to his friend?—Two sophistical reasons, backed by vanity, prevented this necessary step. "She is quite alone," thought he, "she has no protector but me. I cannot venture to abandon the young helpless orphan to chance. And besides, the interest of my friend! Must I not rather redouble my visits, to talk to her daily of his accomplishments, and thus by degrees animate her heart to love?"

Alas! all this might have perfectly succeeded, had he only apprised her of the secret that he was married; that he

was

was united to an amiable wife, and was now perhaps a father. But we must here confess a weakness of our hero—a weakness which he had in common with three-fourths of his sex. Although unquestionably he laid no claim to Babet's love, yet he secretly felt himself so flattered by it, that such a discovery daily became more unpleasant. Often the decisive word hovered upon his lips; but one of Babet's ingenuous glances again overthrew his resolution; and though he did not use the smallest effort to cherish the flame, it was high treason to friendship and to love not to extinguish it. Far be it from us, therefore, to attempt to justify our hero's foible, who, in this instance, allowed himself to be governed by his vanity.

He did not attempt to justify himself at the bar of his conscience. He bitterly reproached his own conduct, and daily procrastinated with honest but un-
 availing

availing resolutions, till a good angel came seasonably to his relief.

One evening when he entered his apartment in profound meditation, he found a letter from Jeanetté lying upon the table. He blushed, pressed the well-known characters to his lips, and hastily broke the seal. She informed him of her happy delivery, described the beauty of the lovely boy, her maternal transports, her anxiety to see the beloved father.—All was tenderness and love. Not a trace of jealousy was to be found in the whole letter; every line discovered the fondest confidence, which rejected the most distant thought of the possibility of infidelity. Ha! this generosity touched him to the quick. A tear started in his eye; he raised his eyes, and secretly swore to God and his conscience to appear before Babet next day with this letter in his hand.

And indeed this time he would have
kept

kept his word, but the caprice of fortune was not yet weary of embittering his cup of life. In the morning William awoke in a strong fever, which had been occasioned by a cold he had caught in coming home one wet harvest evening. At first he paid no attention to it. He attempted to rise and put on his clothes, but scarcely had he left his bed, when the fever attacked him more violently. One shivering fit succeeded another, and again compelled him to return to bed.

There was but one physician in the town, who combined with William's impatience to increase a slight indisposition. On the fifth day he felt his strength so impaired by a profusion of drugs, that he began to fear he should never more revisit his native land.

When Babet had for some days expected in vain a visit from her friend, she sent a peasant boy to the town to enquire after him. The news of the danger

danger in which the man she secretly loved was placed, plunged her into unspeakable anxiety. An hundred times she was on the point of flying to his bedside, and an hundred times her female modesty withheld her. She now felt, and for the first time acknowledged to herself, how much she was attached to William. She now saw that it was on his account that life had acquired new charms. Two or three times a day she sent the boy to town to bring her tidings of his health. The impatience with which she expected his return, the inquisitive anxiety with which she ran to meet him, indubitably testified the warmth of her attachment.

William's illness, though not dangerous, was very lingering. It left a languor and debility behind, which prevented him from going abroad. In a few weeks he again walked through the room; but he could not mount the stair, and
 durst

durst not venture to expose himself to the bleak autumn winds. He always sent, however, the most flattering accounts to his anxious friend, and was so accustomed to the appearance of the little messenger, that at the hour when the latter used to arrive he stood at the window, and expected him with impatience.

All at once the boy failed to come at the usual hour. He came not in the morning; he did not appear in the evening. This surprised William the first day; the second it gave him uneasiness; the third his anxiety was extremely painful; and on the fourth he could no longer endure the tortures of suspense. He threw on his great-coat, supported himself on a crutch, and slowly bent his way along the well-known road.

When he saw at a distance Babet's habitation, his heart beat; but he carried his talisman, Jeanette's letter, in
his

his bosom, and it was the anxiety of friendship alone which caused his agitation. Expectation redoubled his strength and his speed. He entered the gate with inquisitive looks; he went through the desolate court; he ascended the stair, found all the doors open, and all the apartments empty. Not a trace was to be seen of Babet or her servant; not a sound announced the presence of a human being.

“Perhaps,” thought he, “some new tumult has compelled her to take refuge in the cavern.” He endeavoured to grope his way in the dark down to the dungeon, and to find the place where the entrance of the cavern was guarded by loose stones. He found it, and whispered softly—then louder and louder: “Babet! It is I! it is your friend!”—In vain, all was silent.

“Perhaps,” did hope again suggest, “solitude has renewed her enthusiastic turn.

turn. Perhaps I shall find her in the grotto."—With much difficulty he succeeded in finding his way back through the dark winding passages. He went to the garden, traversed the grove through the leafless trees, went softly over the bridge, stood before the door of the grotto, and saw nothing but the picture of desolation.

"My God!" exclaimed he, "what can have become of the helpless creature?"—With exhausted strength he pryed round the whole neighbourhood, visited the hermitage, searched the ruins of the tower, through which he clambered, calling every where the name of Babet—but in vain.

One time the murmur of the stream deceived his ear; again the buz of a grasshopper in the neighbouring thicket. Still he hoped to clasp Babet; but his hopes deceived him, and every moment his strength decreased. At last he sunk
down

down exhausted under the lime-tree on the lawn, and fell into a kind of unconscious stupor. "Is there then no compassionate mortal at hand, who can give me some intelligence of her?—Would I could but see the little messenger!"—In vain; his vows were unheard, and the approaching night obliged him at last to think of returning home without being able to form one probable conjecture respecting Babet, to cheer him on his solitary way.

Distracted by gloomy presages, tortured by the thought of the despair into which his friend would be plunged by the intelligence, he proceeded on to the town in sorrowful plight, his head reclining on his breast, when he met a peasant boy chanting merrily, "*Allons, enfans de la patrie!*" The sound roused him from his reverie. He looked up—it was the little messenger. "Ha!" cried he hastily, "what has become of

the lady, who for some weeks past sent you daily to enquire for me ?”

“ The lady ?” said the boy carelessly, “ I don’t know. Three days ago she engaged me to come to her, as usual, the following day. When I went, however, she was gone ; I found nobody at all in the house.”

The boy could tell him nothing more. Tired of importunate questions, he took off his hat, again began to sing, and went his way.

CHAP. XII.

THE CONFLAGRATION.

BABET's sudden elopement made so violent an impression upon William, that his illness became more serious than ever, and he would not perhaps have escaped a dangerous relapse, if he had had leisure to dwell upon his situation, and had followed the advice of his physician, who ordered him to keep his bed ; for nothing, perhaps, tends more to confirm sickness than such a regimen. He now forgot his own health, and made incessant enquiries after Babet in all the neighbouring country ; traversed every road, and searched every village, to discover some traces of her. Thus the fresh air and exercise superseded the physician,

and completely cured the patient without farther prescription.

His conscience now became uneasy, and smarted severely at the least touch. To the blame which he justly had incurred, his ingenious sensibility added a new charge, which preyed upon him no less acutely. When after long enquiry and reflection William could discover no other reason for Babet's mysterious flight, vanity at last whispered him, that she had fled from him to seek that cure from the soothing hand of time, which his coldness had apprised her that she could not expect from love.

Alas ! had he but told her sooner that he was married, this would never have happened. If a traveller ignorant of his way comes to a thick gloomy wood, and finds a high road, he proceeds with caution ; even a foot-path may induce him to go on ; but if there is neither beaten track nor path-way, he returns. So is it

it with the labyrinth of Love, in which Cupid's bye roads abound, but through which, too, the great high road of Hymen leads. If the latter is shut, some Werter seeks a forbidden path; a virtuous maid turns quick and flies, however sweetly Love's groves and nightingales may entice.—Babet would have overcome her passion, she now had been the bride of his friend, had not childish vanity—Alas! how he blushed for his weakness!—and be assured, the worst kind of shame is that which surprises us when there is none to witness its effects.

Where now was he to enquire for Babet?—Where obtain intelligence of her?—It was dangerous to enquire after her with too much anxiety. The steps of the prisoners were watched with jealousy; their conversation and their conduct were marked. Babet's family was obnoxious; the warm interest he expressed for her might excite suspicion of

a secret connection, and at this time a secret connection was always considered a conspiracy. He durst venture, therefore, only to put indirect questions, or endeavour by some artifice to discover what he sought; but the unsatisfactory answers which he thus obtained, afforded him no light in his darkness. He at last was silent, and expected from accident a clue to the mystery.

In order, if possible, to put himself in the way of such a discovery, he wandered about from morning till night through all the villages in the neighbourhood, and failed not from time to time to visit Babet's habitation, which he still found desolate and forlorn.

One evening he wandered weary with his search through a village, returning cheerless home with still renewed disappointment. Scarcely had he got through the village, when suddenly he heard a cry of Fire! He looked back,
and

and saw a cottage in flames, which spread so rapidly, that before William could reach the spot the neighbouring houses were in a blaze. The inhabitants flocked together from all quarters ; every thing that could be rescued from the flames was saved, and William vigorously contributed his assistance to carry off whatever he could reach. Sometimes he bore a chest upon his shoulders, which anxiety alone enabled him to carry ; now he tottered under heavy bundles of linen ; and again, to recover himself, stood at the well to supply water. The flames continued to rage, the fire gained ground, those who endeavoured to extinguish it shouted, the unfortunate proprietors lamented their fate, and the fire-bell rang.

A piercing cry suddenly burst through the dreadful noise, and struck William's ear. He made his way to the place from which the voice of woe proceeded, and saw a young woman rolling herself on

the ground in the agonies of despair. She had been in the fields at work when the fire broke out ; she ran breathless to the spot, and found her cottage in flames. She had left a sucking infant in the cradle, and a boy of eight years old to watch his little sister. Neither of them was any where to be found ; the flames prevented all access to the cottage, and the roof every moment threatened to fall in.

The woman lay on the ground, tearing her hair, and uttering such bitter cries as cut the hearts of the by-standers. “ My children ! my children ! —My Antony ! my little Babet ! ” — William could not sustain this cruel spectacle. Without consideration—for the smallest reflection would, on the present occasion, have deterred him from the rash deed—he plunged into the flames.

The spectators shuddered—the mother raised herself on her knees, and stretched

stretched her hands to heaven in the attitude of prayer. — She could not speak — she only cried, and God heard her cries ! — With the screaming boy in one hand, and the sleeping babe in the other, their deliverer returned in half a minute, and, almost suffocated with dust and smoke, dropped senseless at the feet of the weeping mother.

Her joy expressed itself in the wildest transports. She pressed the children warmly to her breast — laughed, wept, and prayed — crept to William, kissed his feet, bathed him in tears, blessed him ! — Then she raised the little suckling to Heaven, and ordered the boy to fold his hands, and pray for his benefactor. The old men stood round — tears hung on their grey eye-lashes ; they pulled off their caps when William again opened his eyes, and gazed at him with respect as a superior being.

The flames were at last extinguished ;

no lives were lost ; William was the only person who had sustained much injury, and lay unable to crawl home. “ Generous stranger,” said the woman, “ willingly would I carry you to my cottage, but I have none to offer you !”—“ Come to mine, come to mine,” cried an hundred voices. They contended for the honour of entertaining the stranger, who had so magnanimously risked his life. An old man at last obtained the preference, because his house was nearest. William was removed to it with the utmost tenderness, and every thing was provided that could contribute to remove the pain, or conduce to his refreshment.

The grateful woman watched all the first night beside him. She sat with the babe at her breast by his bed-side, and offered secret prayers to Heaven for his recovery. They had applied to his wound a salve composed of olive oil and
sweet

sweet cream, mixed with some white lead, a remedy which so greatly assuaged the pain, that about midnight he fell asleep, and next morning when the day was well advanced he awoke, greatly strengthened and refreshed.

To what delightful sensations does he awake, whose first reflections are on the good action he performed the day before ! Delightful sensations !—The happy mother sat before him, and smiled with ineffable benignity. She held out to him the little Babet, as if she would have said : “ See there that lovely innocent ; to thee she owes her life ! ” The dear name of Babet awakened in his mind a train of agreeable ideas, which perhaps yesterday, when the mother expressed her agonising grief, had unconsciously assisted to impel him to the rash attempt.

He now learned that the husband and

brother of the young woman served in the national guard ; that they had lately been ordered on an expedition, from which they were daily expected to return ; and that, reduced to poverty by the conflagration, they would feel nothing so poignantly as their inability to testify their gratitude.

William was so unweariedly tended with the most anxious care, that in a few days he was in a situation to quit the house of his benevolent host. He was followed with blessings from every quarter. The young woman accompanied him out of the village ; and when he was about to leave her, she attempted to kiss his hand. She entreated him with tears not to forget her, but as often as his walks were in this direction to call at her house, and taste the joys of the noble action he had performed.

He promised to visit her again, shook
her

her heartily by the hand, and, accompanied by the delightful feeling of having been the benefactor of an honest family, which he considered recompense enough, he walked light and cheerily home.

CHAP. XIII.

THE PASSPORT.

WHILE all this was passing upon the agitated theatre of French liberty, Nature had set free a little captive, who had long been expected with anxiety. Jeanette was delivered of a boy—lovely as a May-day would I say, were all May-days lovely. To use a comparison more precise, the little William was lovely as every mother considers her first-born son. Jeanette, as is usual with mothers, thought him very sensible at the end of fourteen days. She alone saw him laugh, she alone saw in his scarce visible nose the counter part of the hawk nose of her husband. She remarked that he already knew her, that he stretched out his hands to her—In a word, the boy was just such a prodigy as the whole world

world is peopled with, if we are to believe what mothers tell us.

Poor Jeanette's joy at the birth of her boy was greatly embittered by the intelligence of William's captivity. It was some consolation to her, indeed, that his life was no longer exposed to the swords and bullets of the enemy, and that she might now hear or read of battles without trembling. But yet was not her beloved exposed to a thousand dangers, which perhaps it might be more difficult to parry than the grenadier's bayonet in the open field?—Did he not live in a country where vague suspicion passed for convicted guilt, and where the people at once pronounced and executed the sentence?—But, should his prudence and discretion elude the ever wakeful jealousy of his foes, might he not be sick?—A new climate, anxiety, *ennui*, every thing which can affect the health, may lay him on a sick-bed,

bed, and who then is to care for him?—who watch and tend him?—who give him his medicines at the proper moment?—Paid hirelings! who with pleasure would see him die, in order to rob the deceased stranger!—Has he not a wife whom love and duty call to his aid?—The journey is dangerous, but do love and duty shrink from any difficulties?—The journey is attended with many obstacles and hardships, but is love acquainted with trifles like these?—Did William weigh all these considerations when he came from the camp to Munster?—But the mother must leave her new-born child—Alas! that indeed is the hardest condition of all!—The little sweet creature is so infinitely dear to her! almost as dear as his father!—Her heart is distracted, but at length decides for him—him who by his unbounded love has acquired a right to every sacrifice.

Jeanette

Jeanette made every arrangement which maternal anxiety could suggest for the most careful treatment of her child. She committed him to the superintendence of a clergyman's widow, who was her friend and neighbour. She left him in the hands of a nurse, an honest country woman, who loved the boy as her own child. The moment of separation was dreadful, but she tore herself away, and obeyed the dictates of the most sacred duty. Accompanied only by the faithful Peter, she set out on her journey, and arrived safe at Paris, at this period the theatre of Robespierre's enormities.

She had taken the precaution to feign herself poor, and Peter appeared a perfect *sans culotte*. She accordingly enjoyed the most enviable advantage which could be possessed at this moment, that of remaining unnoticed.—Hitherto a guardian angel seemed to have guided her steps, but no difficulties increased upon

upon her which it was difficult for a helpless woman to surmount. She remained several weeks in Paris before she could learn to whom she ought to apply for a passport, to carry her safe through the interior of France. She was sent from one office to another, and no where was she treated with the respect due to her sex. Here a taylor gave himself airs, there she was exposed to the vulgar jests of a peruke-maker, dressed out with the tri-coloured cockade ; here was she hooted by a secretary, and there imposed upon by a clerk. Those who treated her best, advised her not to excite suspicion by too much importunity, and bade her be patient till to-morrow.

Judge of the situation of a poor helpless woman, who alone in the midst of this huge Golgotha, unacquainted with the dangers by which she was surrounded, trod every moment on the brink of a precipice, knew nothing of the forms it
was

was necessary to observe, and among a million of pretended philanthropists, could not find a single good man, who showed a real principle of humanity and friendship. Think of the misery of a woman who longed, with the most glowing impatience, to be again united to her husband, who every morning left her lodgings with renewed hopes that now she should attain the object and reward of her fond perseverance, when she returned home again in the evening weary and forlorn. Thus did several weeks elapse, and the sickness of hope disappointed began at length to give place to despair.

One morning, when she had wandered from street to street, and from office to office, and had every where in vain sought humanity under the red cap, exhausted with fatigue, she lost herself in the garden of the *Tuilleries*, sunk down upon
a bench

a bench, and, without regarding the company passing by, bitterly wept her fate. Many stopped and gazed at her a moment. Many, accustomed to the daily spectacle of misery, passed carelessly along. Nobody asked : " Poor woman, what is the matter with you ? "

A beautiful woman, elegantly dressed in the Grecian style, now came down one of the walks. Jeanette did not observe her. The lady observed Jeanette with sympathy, did not stop indeed, but frequently looked back. After passing on a little she returned, repassed the mourner, and whispered : " Do not weep, my child ! To shed tears is a crime here ! "

Jeanette looked up.—Scarce had she time to observe the benignant profile of the lovely stranger ; but the features were so blended with humanity and kindness, that they instantly inspired the
poor

poor outcast with confidence. She started up, followed the lady, and eagerly exclaimed: "Ah! madam, pity a poor helpless stranger!"

The angelic creature turned timorously round, and said eagerly: "Not here! not here!—Come in the evening to the *Rue St. Honoré*, and enquire at number 27, for *Theresa Cabarrus**.

She disappeared, but her words remained deep in Jeanette's memory. With impatience she expected the evening; hope lent her wings; with serene confidence she appeared before the amiable Theresa.

"Forgive me, madam," said the gentle creature, "forgive me for seeming this morning to treat you with harshness; but you know not how dangerous it is in this place to show compassion for the unfortunate. Here we are alone.

* The present madame Tallien.

Impart to me your distress. Your figure, and the expression of grief on your countenance, have inspired me with the wish to be of service to you. I have a little influence. Speak freely."

Alas! such accents! such kind attentive goodness were now strange to Jeanette's ear and heart. She burst into tears, but they were tears of melancholy pleasure. The artless narrative of her simple tale affected Theresa. She detained the amiable wife, to whom she felt herself attracted, to supper, and sat down to write a note. She then entertained her guest with the most unconstrained cheerfulness, and carefully avoided touching upon any chord which did not sound in unison with innocent gaiety. Jeanette, animated with new hopes, forgot the sorrows by which she was oppressed. What Theresa said was so kind and so elegantly expressed, that even a woman was compelled to yield her whole attention.

attention. The few hours which elapsed till supper flew rapidly and pleasantly away. They sat down to table—and when Jeanette lifted her cover she found a passport in the plate.

CHAP. XIV.

THE MAYOR.

THE happy pilgrim breathed silent blessings over her guardian angel when she saw the barrier of Paris shut behind her. Engrossed with delightful contemplations she lolled in the corner of her chaise. The most enchanting landscapes passed unnoticed. She never stopped at any stage. Twenty times a day indeed was Jeanette obliged to show her passport ; but it was immediately returned to her with sulky looks, because the most dexterous inquisitor could find no error in it.

The anxious wife, hastening to her beloved husband, allowed herself neither repose nor refreshment ; the third day had dawned, when a restless slumber overpowered her for a few moments. A
large

large town now presented itself to their view, where she resolved to stop till next morning, to recruit her exhausted strength.

As she entered the gate she heard a noise in the neighbouring streets, to which at first she paid no attention. When she came near the market-place, however, she saw an immense crowd of people, who flocked together from all quarters. She was now alarmed; for all she had read and heard of the wild ebullitions of popular fury suddenly recurred to her mind.

Alas! in a luckless hour she had entered within the walls of this town. It would be superfluous to relate how the tumult arose. The people resemble the sand in the desert, which at first is whirled round by the gentle breeze in little volumes, is by degrees agitated deeper and deeper, till it swells into a sweeping torrent, which overwhelms every thing it

meets, tears the trees up by the roots, and buries men and houses in destruction.

Some Jacobin had been preaching up the plundering system of an equal division of property, and collected the journeymen, and porters, and servants, by the force of their arms to carry it into effect. The infuriated people assembled in crowds to murder a score of rich people, and share their inheritance under the banner of liberty.

When Jeanette entered the town, the people were entertaining themselves with that spectacle with which they had so often been glutted since the 9th Thermidor, that of bloody heads carried in procession upon pikes. The carriage was suddenly caught in the crowd, and could move neither backward nor forward. Jeanette trembled and grew pale when she perceived the frantic rabble, who, instead of the former images of
saints

saints and consecrated banners, carried in triumph the bloody ensigns of human heads which they had cut off.

Peter sat on the coach-box, and gazed with open mouth and looks of horror. The lofty box made the poor fellow, against his will, a prominent object. When the sanguinary rout came up, one of the standard-bearers thought proper to practise the cruel jest of clapping the goary head to Peter's nose, and insisted on his kissing it. As Peter did not understand a word of French, and therefore did not know what they required him to do, the natural disgust which such a spectacle inspired, taught him to turn away the bloody head with both his hands. But the greater reluctance he expressed, and the more he protested, in German, against this violence, the more obstinate the people became, and with frantic shouts insisted that he should obey.

Jeanette dropped down senseless. Her

faithful servant was torn from the box, kicked and abused in the most cruel manner. Peter must have fallen a sacrifice to their fury, if the attention of the miscreants had not been withdrawn from the footman to his mistress in the carriage. "This way, brothers!" cried one of them in a brutal tone, "here is an Austrian lady, who cannot stand the sight of royalist blood." They broke open the carriage, pulled out the unconscious victim, searched her pockets, plundered her of her money, took her passport, tore it to pieces, and scattered it in the air.

Already a thousand voices thundered her doom, and a savage monster, with an ax in his hand, offered to undertake the office of her executioner. Most seasonably, at this moment, a young man, of a genteel appearance, followed by a detachment of the national guard, made his way through the crowd; and, in the
name

name of the law, enjoined tranquillity. This command, enforced by threatening bayonets, procured respect, and rescued the victim. The people dispersed with murmurs.

When Jeanette opened her eyes, she found herself, surrounded by soldiers, in the arms of a young man, who gazed at her with complacency. He announced himself as the mayor of the town, and so politely congratulated himself on his good fortune in being her deliverer, that Jeanette immediately recognised him to be an elegant, accomplished man.—

“Take courage, madam,” said he with respectful interest, “the danger is over. Have the goodness to allow me to conduct you to my house. My wife and I will do every thing in our power to give you a better opinion of our town.”

The mention of a wife redoubled Jeanette’s confidence; she accepted his offer with thanks; he assisted her into

the carriage, which the guard surrounded, and he himself followed on foot. Poor Peter was so beaten and bruised, that he was not able to mount the coach-box, but was obliged to be led by two grenadiers. He had, at last, found out what they wished him to do, and in whimpering voice cursed the horrible proposal. "Were there never," said he to his conductors, "another woman for me in the world but here, and were she the fairest that ever was seen, I should not come for her to your country, and be forced to kiss bloody heads." The soldiers looked at him and laughed, for they did not understand what he said.—Every body knows, but the circumstance has never been explained, even by Kant, that an ignorant man always laughs when he does not understand a thing.—The mayor's lady welcomed the stranger with polite hospitality. She was ushered into an elegant apartment, which was furnished

furnished with every conveniency ; the table was covered with all kinds of refreshments. They pressed her earnestly to partake of them ; but when she assured them that she wanted nothing but repose, they politely withdrew and left her alone.

Her first care was to thank God on her knees for her deliverance. She threw herself on the bed, which was adorned with silken curtains, that formed an agreeable shade. She fell asleep, and did not awake till the evening, greatly refreshed. Scarcely had a little noise she made announced that she was awake, when the mistress of the house drew aside the curtains, kindly enquired how she did, and invited her to supper in the family circle.

Jeanette appeared in the full splendour of youthful beauty. The roses which terror had chased from her cheeks, bloomed afresh. Refreshing sleep, and

a delightful dream of having met with her husband, had kindled a delicate fire in her eye. Every body complimented her, all pressed round her, every one endeavoured to say something civil, and Beaublanc himself (for that was the mayor's name) distinguished himself by his assiduity, conversed with her in the most agreeable manner, and strove to anticipate her most trivial wishes.

Jeanette would have forgot herself in this pleasing society, if her anxiety to see William had not been much more powerful than the charms of any kind of amusement. Immediately after supper she entreated her deliverer to send for post-horses, as she wished to pursue her journey, even by night. Her request seemed to throw him into some confusion. He represented to her the necessity of repose; he called a physician, who happened to be in company, to give weight to his remonstrance; and when nothing

nothing could shake the impatience of the anxious wife to be gone, he exaggerated the dangers to which she exposed herself, as the people still swarmed disorderly round the house; he promised her next day to take precautions for her safety. All was in vain. Jeanette persevered in her resolution to set off immediately.

Beaublanc at last was obliged to acquiesce, and begged to see her passport, which his duty required him to examine. Jeanette hastily put her hand in her pocket—but how great was her terror when she found neither passport nor money, and was obliged to bring out her hand empty!—"Ah! God!" exclaimed she, turning pale as ashes—"Ah! God!"—She could say no more—her knees shook, and she was forced to sit down.

The mayor seemed to receive the news of this unfortunate accident with

his wishes. He loved her still, his heart was hers, but his licentiousness she was not able to restrain. Many a tear she wept in secret; sometimes a tender reproof escaped her, which the young man felt indeed, but it produced no other effect but to render him more guarded in his intrigues, and more secret in his infidelities. When he was detected, he threw himself at her feet, clasped her knees, wept, entreated, called himself a wretched licentious profligate, and could not conceive, when he possessed so amiable a wife, how he could have any taste for other charms. In a word, he never ceased till she tenderly forgave him.

After these occasions succeeded an interval of domestic happiness for two or three months, during which, his wife was satisfied with his conduct, and he was satisfied with himself; for after such occurrences he seriously endeavoured to

correct his bad habits, but all his resolution vanished if a new beauty fell in his way. In a word, he resembled a needle, which turns steadily to its pole so long as it is not attracted by some new and more powerful magnet.

Jeanette's appearance happened just in one of these intervals of domestic tranquillity, during which Beaublane had been the best husband in the world, and when he had solemnly promised after his last error never to wander again. Who could have suspected that he should thus accidentally meet with a woman like Jeanette ? who seemed as if formed by an adverse fate on purpose to triumph over his firmest resolutions. When he rescued her from the fury of the populace ; when she lay senseless in his arms, and her half-covered bosom beat against his ; when her lily cheeks touched his, and his mouth received the first breath which re-animated her lips—ah !
his

his heart was gone!—His attention, his hospitality, his humane exertions sprang from a source which his experienced wife easily discovered. Those suspicions which had been but too often justified awaked. She trembled, and concealed her apprehension, too patient to cry Fire on perceiving the first sparks, and too generous to revenge the inconstancy of her husband upon an innocent stranger.

During the first day she consoled herself in the expectation of the speedy departure of her guest; but when the disagreeable accident of the loss of the passport was mentioned, when she discovered the secret joy of her husband, and saw herself compelled to entertain so dangerous a rival in the house for several weeks, her only hope was in the character of the stranger, whose dignified manners and modest reserve inspired her with confidence that the licentious views of her husband would here be disappointed.

She was not mistaken. It was some time before Jeanette perceived the unwelcome triumph of her charms; and when she could no longer doubt the fact, it caused her the most cruel vexation. Her situation became more painful than ever. What could she now do?—Was she to tease with importunities the man who had saved her life, and given her a secure asylum in his house?—But he had not yet made any express declaration of his passion. His looks only spoke what he felt; a thousand little attentions betrayed the state of his heart. It was possible that he struggled with himself, that he endeavoured to extinguish his rising attachment, and in this case he deserved pity rather than reproach. How happy would she have been to have aided his struggling virtue by a sudden flight! but whither could she fly, without money, and without a passport?

Should she confide the secret to her
kind

kind hostess? Ought she to awaken the jealousy of an unsuspecting wife; and, as a reward for her sisterly attention, plant a dagger in her heart? No! She rather chose to be silent, to conceal her anguish, to throw a veil over her grief, and resolved as much as possible to avoid the company of Beaublanc, and to wait the arrival of her passport in solitude, which she took every opportunity to indulge. She contrived many pretexts for spending the forenoon in her own apartment. In the afternoon she was going to write to William, or a head-ache furnished her with an apology, or she walked with her hostess in the garden. Often too unwelcome guests detained the mayor, so that he found but little opportunity to enjoy the company of his new love.

The conduct which Jeanette observed was indeed perfectly well calculated to keep Beaublanc at a distance; but it
could

could have little effect in repressing his passion, since perpetual obstacles only inflamed him the more, and drove him to despair. The more his wife felt herself indebted to the delicate and discreet conduct of the generous stranger, the more expedients did Beaublanc contrive to prolong Jeanette's stay, in the hope that a favourable opportunity would at last lead to the accomplishment of his wishes.

For the attainment of his object he was not very scrupulous about the means he employed. A month had elapsed, the new passport had really arrived, but Beaublanc concealed it. During this period Jeanette had written eight letters to her husband; but Beaublanc had suppressed them, and his jealousy delighted to observe the anguish of the wife, who considered William's silence as an ill presage. He himself undertook to make enquiries in the place where William re-
sided,

fided, but only to communicate to her equivocal intelligence. Sometimes he gave the anxious wife reason to suspect the death of her husband; sometimes he told her of a prisoner of war answering his description who had married a rich heiress.

With regard to the passport, it was easier to mislead her unsuspecting confidence; for what could be more natural than in the revolutionary confusion which now prevailed in Paris that such a trifle should be forgotten?—A letter to Theresa remained unanswered. Theresa and William were silent precisely for the same reason.

The poor forlorn Jeanette, separated from all she loved and honoured, trembling for the life of her husband, of her child, wept bitter tears in secret. As Beaublanc had now completely laid aside the mask, as he became more pressing, and did not hesitate even to offend her
tender

tender ear with his ardent passion, her sorrows reached the highest pitch.

She endeavoured by raillery and remonstrance, by severity and by mildness, to recall him to the path of reason and of duty, but in vain. He remained unmoved by her tears, deaf to her representations, and callous to the silent grief of his wife. He was at no pains to conceal the hope that William might be dead. He laboured to render her familiar with this frightful idea. He insinuated how easy it would be for him, according to the present marriage code of France, to procure a separation from his wife. He dropped hints of his wealth, his consequence, the splendid life which he could enable a wife whom he loved to enjoy. In a word, he left no arts unemployed which could shake Jeanette's conjugal fidelity. Her passions he likewise endeavoured to engage by the display of an elegant figure, which
was

was animated and adorned by the glow of love; and he exerted himself to give it new charms by the most tasteful display of dress.

It is unnecessary to assure the reader that all his arts were baffled, and fell harmless from Jeanette's heart, like a blunt arrow from a mail of steel. Not a soul drop ever mingled in the pure fountain of her feelings. Never once did her vanity listen with complacency to his passion, and even the certainty of William's death would have produced no alteration in her sentiments. But this did not at all contribute to render her situation less wretched. She was dependant upon a man who laboured to obtain his criminal object at every risk; who, as appeared, did not even shrink from the commission of a crime if it promised to conduct him to his wishes; for he had now gone so far as to throw out menaces, and to drop hints at which her virtue trembled.

trembled. And if indeed his uncontrolled passion should prompt him to acts of violence—alas! what guardian divinity would then protect the helpless Jeanette!

CHAP. XV.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRIEST.

HAPPY for thee, William, that you never suspected the sorrows to which thy poor Jeanette was doomed ! You imagined that your faithful wife was safe at home with the dear boy at her breast. You saw her in imagination sitting with maternal fondness by the cradle of her son, and you thought that anxiety alone for his father could sometimes dash a drop of melancholy into this cup of joy. Letters full of delightful hope you wrote her every week, which would contribute to moderate that anxiety. Poor easy William ! she received them not.

That man should be so short-sighted ! that hills and valleys should interpose between the sorrows of the mistress and the sympathy of the lover ; that perhaps
a mother,

a mother, a wife languishes in want and misery, while the son or husband walks abroad unconscious and unconcerned; that two souls closely united in congenial sentiments should never, when separated by the smallest distance, discover by some slight anxiety or secret horror the sufferings in which the lover or the friend is involved!—Alas! shall I say that *it is well, or that it is ill for man that it should be thus ordered?*

After Babet disappeared, and his friend was torn from him, William's most delightful dreams now hung undivided upon his native land, on his beloved Jeanette, the object of his most ardent wishes. Engrossed with these contemplations, he strolled in harvest through the fading flowers; or, when the bustle of industry offered him unwelcome amusement, he plunged into the shady recesses of a wood, or stole among the bulrushes which skirted a murmuring brook. The
hope

hope of again finding Babet daily decreased, like the bank which the stream every moment washes and sweeps away.

One day the morning had issued from the chambers of the east wrapped in a veil of thick mists, but the sun had withdrawn the clouds from the face of day, as a youthful husband by his caresses prevails upon his wife to lay aside her veil—William stood earlier than usual upon a little hillock near the town, sunk in meditations, which the landscape around and the view of the flitting clouds had inspired. He thought of the birth of man, and the first dawn of life; how often the cradle of a king is adorned by the beams of morn, while before 'tis noon the throne is involved in clouds and tempests; how often darkness and mists cover the poor man's cradle, while the caprice of fortune prepares for the obscure child a serene and joyful evening. His own example recurred to his mind, and

with the last traces of the parting clouds his gratitude mounted up to heaven.

The temper of his soul was now so sublimated that it sought for kindred objects, and he therefore resolved this day to ascend to the top of a hill, which he had long marked out as the boundary of his excursions. The way to it was through the village, the inhabitants of which, since the conflagration, loved him with brotherly affection. He wished to pass on unobserved; but the little boy he had saved came running after him, and, pulling him by the coat, said: "Mother is coming too; she cannot run so fast." William stopped, and waited till the young woman came up with the most cordial expressions of joy, and held out to him her smiling infant. She kindly complained that he had quite forgot her; the boy had daily asked for him, and she had been much grieved at his absence. A thousand

times she had thanked God for the deliverance of her children, but she had lamented that she had not an opportunity to express her gratitude to the angel whom God had sent. She then informed him that she now lived in the house of her father-in-law till her cottage was rebuilt, and begged him to be so good as come and partake of a rural breakfast. She was so pressing, she so eagerly wished in this way to show her kindness, that it was impossible for him to refuse.

He was conducted to a neat, clean house, where he was cordially received by an old man with silver grey locks. Every body was employed in the house; they ran backwards and forwards, sought the whitest cloth, the clearest glasses, the finest plates. They brought out honey, butter, milk, and fruits; and every eye sparkled with joy when the welcome guest seemed to eat with appetite. They
 appeared

appeared delighted that their efforts had succeeded in pleasing their benefactor.

The young woman told him that during his absence her husband and brother had been at home, and heard of his noble deed, and both of them intended to come to town to thank him, but the calls of service prevented them. "Yesterday," added the weeping wife, "they were sent off in search of aristocrats, and God knows when they will return."

At the latest, however, she hoped they would be home on Saturday, and William was obliged to promise solemnly to repeat his visit next Sunday. After he had ate and drank a great deal from pure complaisance, he told the good people his intention to walk to the top of the hill, which began gradually to ascend just at the back of the village. He enquired which road he ought to take. They told him it was several miles to the top; first, he must cross a

bridge, then he would come to a sheep-cot, then he must quit the road, and ascend by the left-hand way. The ascent was steep and difficult. They advised him to provide himself with refreshments, and insisted on filling his pockets with fruit. William, however, refused, as he wished to be as light as possible; and said, if necessary, that he should find milk at the sheep-cot to which he was directed. The young woman, however, represented the inhabitants to be rough, unobliging people, and desired him to observe a small house not far from the sheep-cot. "There," said she, "lives our constitutional priest, a good, kind-hearted man; call there if you want refreshment. He receives every body with welcome."

William thanked her, and went away with the resolution to call no where unless he was compelled by some unforeseen accident. He easily found the road
which

which had been pointed out to him, lay on the top of the hill, and enjoyed the delightful prospect into the fertile valley below, through which the river rolled along in a thousand meanders. He traced out Babet's deserted habitation, the sight of which banished the serenity of his soul. He resolved to look at it no more, and his eyes still recurred to it. The landscape lost its charms, he sunk into a melancholy mood, and did not observe that twilight began to approach.

He started up. The shades of night already covered the valley. A grey streak of the setting sun still glittered on the summits of the rocks. He hastily descended the foot-path, and night thickened fast round. Too much precipitation might lead him astray. He began, therefore, to walk more slowly, and to examine the path, since, if he lost it, he must be compelled to pass the cold harvest night in the open air in this

solitude, which, after his late illness, might be attended with danger.

He was extremely happy, therefore, after wandering several hours through unbeaten tracks, to reach a fold belonging to the sheep-cot. Recollecting the advice of his friends, however, he did not call, but directed his steps to the abode of the priest, whose white-washed walls glittered through the shade at the distance of a few hundred paces. Here he resolved to beg a night's lodging, as it began to rain, and the darkness became every moment thicker.

As no light appeared through the windows, he began to fear that there was nobody at home, and was about to ring the bell, when the screams of a female voice struck his ear. The sound seemed to proceed from a back house or cellar, and William distinctly heard the words "*Help ! help !*"

He now pulled the bell with violence
several

several times. He endeavoured to open the house-door, but it was locked. He attempted to get over the wall round the court, but it was too high. The screams still continued, and cut him to the heart. He ran anxiously as fast as he could round the whole place, hovering like a hen over a pond where her foster ducklings swim. He reached a garden fenced with a thick hedge. He was not deterred by the thorns, continued to make his way through, and hastened to the place from which the cries proceeded.

He came to a back-door, which appeared but ill-secured ; he struck it with his foot, and it flew open. He entered, stumbled, and fell. An iron shovel lay in his way : he rose, seized the shovel, for some obscure feeling told him that here arms were necessary. The shrieks had changed into moans of lamentation ; he followed the sound, which soon brought him to the door of a room. It

was shut; he thundered at it with his fist. A man's voice cried, "*Who is there?*"

"Open," cried William.—They refused.—"Open, or I will break open the door!"—They still refused. William threw himself with all his force against the door, and drove it from its hinges. At this moment the light in the room was extinguished, and William received a violent blow on the shoulder, which probably was aimed at his head. He easily could discern the figure that had struck the blow. He lifted up his shovel, and struck so violent a blow at the shadow, that the latter cried, "*Jesu Maria!*" and dropped to the ground.

At the same time another figure slipped past him out at the door. He now remained thunderstruck in this extraordinary situation; here at his feet a man whom probably he had mortally wounded; a few steps from him a low voice
of

of lamentation continued to moan ; utter darkness prevailed, and the whole house was utterly unknown. He groped round the place from which the sound proceeded, struck against a bed, and found a person whom by the dress he supposed to be a lady.

“ Who is here ? ” said he. Groans were the only answer. He was almost inclined to join in unison with these groans, for the pain in his shoulder was very violent. Without light, however, he could neither assist himself nor others. But where was he to find it ?—Where was the kitchen, in which, perhaps, the fire was still alive in the embers ? He went out, groped along the wall, crept through the whole house, sometimes found the doors open, sometimes shut, but no where what he sought. He now was unable to find the way back to the mysterious chamber, and had resolved to

wait on the stair till morning, when he heard keys turning, and a door fling open with great noise. A number of voices sounded through the passage, and a gleam of light was seen at a distance.

Conscious of his innocence, he went fearless to meet the party, and found a number of half-naked peasants, who, armed with all kinds of weapons, pressed in, led by an ugly old woman with a lanthorn.—“There is the robber,” cried the woman when she saw William. He had thrown down the shovel; the peasants seized him quite defenceless, and tied his hands behind his back.

In vain he protested his innocence, in vain he attempted to relate the accident which had brought him to the house; the old beldame bore him down. “He meant to rob my good master, your worthy pastor!” cried she with shrill voice. “Who knows but he may have
already

already murdered him? His niece the villain first gagged; by God's mercy I contrived to escape in the dark."

The accusation was so monstrous, that William was amazed, and viewed the woman with looks of contempt. She ran on before with the lanthorn, the crowd followed with William bound in the middle. They entered the room—William looked round, and was confounded.—On the bed lay a beautiful young lady gagged with a handkerchief.—It was *Babet*!—On the ground lay weltering in his blood a thick-headed priest—It was *Jeanette's ravisher*!

CHAP. XVI.

A CRITICAL SITUATION.

NATURE is so fruitful in surprising incidents, that the most creative imagination cannot surpass her works. The reader should not, therefore, pronounce this history improbable because it is surprising. We live in times when it would be matter of no great wonder to see the Emperor of China, like Dionysus of old, turn schoolmaster. Why then should we wonder to find a priest in his vocation? But he was a convicted child-murderer!—Why, what then?—When the innocent and virtuous La Fayette languishes in a dungeon, is it matter of surprise that an infamous miscreant should be at large? As long as the former is found not improbable, the latter must be allowed to pass for very natural.

natural.—The whole affair too hangs so simply together, that it is very easy to solve the mystery.

The priest, as the reader will remember, in the first volume of this history, was withdrawn from the civil power, and shut up in a cloister. This, however, was done only *pro forma*, to remove him from the view of the good believers, who might have taken offence at his little mischievous tricks. His more tolerant brethren took no offence at the matter, but chastised him as the Spartans used to chastise a boy who happened to steal clumsily. After a short confinement, they gave him money for his expences, and sent him about his business. He chose France as the place of his retreat, where, according to the spirit of the priesthood, he took a share in every thing, accommodated himself to the spirit of the time, practised the easy art of ingratiating himself with the people, was
one

one of the first who, without scruple, took the famous constitutional oath, recommended himself to the people in power, and, in the most natural way imaginable, insinuated himself into the confidence of an unsuspecting congregation, who chose him their pastor, and settled upon him a considerable income and a comfortable house, from which a worthy old man, whose conscience revolted from the oath, was driven naked and helpless.

Here he played his part with more prudence and success than in Germany. He took into his house an old procuress, who, in better times, had resided in the capital, and had been the confidante of several distinguished characters. The fall of the great had likewise involved her fortunes, as the storm which levels the oak destroys the cobwebs among its leaves. She left the country, was almost starved; she returned, narrowly escaped

escaped the guillotine, and saved herself by taking refuge under the wings of a constitutional priest. Here she again had an opportunity to exercise her talents; and she gave her protector so many proofs of them, that he dropped the design of marrying her which he had first conceived, and employed her hellish art in corrupting the innocence of the country girls, till Babet's charms captivated his foul passions.

That very day when William was attacked by the fever, and Babet expected her friend under the lime-tree on the lawn, accident brought the priest this way. He saw the lovely maid, as she lay carelessly on the bench, her head reclining on her snow-white hand, while her auburn locks waved round her bosom, and her elegant foot played in the sand. This was more than sufficient to inflame his passions. He approached, with that soft, simpering air which he had ever at command, as a courtier his
smile.

smile. "Those mourning weeds," said he, "tell me that you are in grief, and my office justifies me in intruding upon you with an offer of consolation."

He sat down beside her, and talked to her a jargon for which we Germans ought to have a word, since the thing may likewise be found among the priests of our country. Babet, educated in a cloister, was accustomed to consider these wolves in sheep's clothing as a superior class of beings. She received him with respect and confidence. She rejoiced once more to see a priest, whose consoling conversation she had been so long denied. She willingly gave him permission to visit her daily. She even begged him to come, and, on the very first interview, joyfully offered him one of her diamonds to say masses for the souls of her father and brother.

The priest soon found what an unsuspecting creature chance had thrown in his way. The very next visit he discovered

covered all Babet's secrets, of every kind ; he learnt the flight of her brother, her attachment to William, the treasure she had concealed in the casket ; he discovered all, and bounded with joy, like Satan in Klopstock's Messiah. Any attempt, indeed, to change Babet's childish confidence into love, was not very likely to succeed, as she was much too innocent to understand what he meant. When he gazed at her with glowing passion, she considered his ardour to be paternal kindness ; and when he pressed her hand, she kissed his respectfully. To give her any opportunity of discovering the foul corruption of his heart was dangerous ; her innocence might be alarmed, and she might take offence.

Under pretence of placing her in safety, he proposed to take her home to his house, as his niece. He represented to her the danger to which she was daily exposed in this solitary habitation ;
the

the impropriety of a young lady, quite deserted, living thus without protection. He then displayed the advantages of the undisturbed tranquillity she might enjoy at his house, the security with which she could there, unknown and unpersecuted, indulge her grief, and perform the duties of devotion.

His arguments made an impression upon Babet, but they were not attended with all the effect which he expected. The image of her friend was too deeply engraved upon her heart ; she must see him and consult with him before she finally adopted a resolution by which they would be separated. She did not, therefore, absolutely refuse the paternal offer of the priest, as she called it, but postponed her decision till William's recovery.

Such a delay and such consultation were not consistent with the priest's plan. He dreaded the return of this dangerous

dangerous prisoner, and saw the necessity of accomplishing his purpose before the arrival of this friend opposed a new obstacle to his success. One evening, therefore, when Babet informed him with joy, that she had received the most favourable accounts of the convalescence of her friend, and that she expected to see him in a few days, he conceived a diabolical artifice for the completion of his design. At midnight somebody knocked at Babet's door : the maid went down, and received, from an unknown hand, a letter, which she carried to her mistress. It contained the following words, written in a hasty and scarce legible manner :

“ Dearest sister ! Fate, whose hand lies heavy upon our house, is not yet weary of persecuting me. Our frontiers are too closely watched to allow me to escape ; our faithful servant has been murdered, and I am a wretched fugitive.

Of

Of what I took with me from my father's inheritance, I have partly been robbed, and part I have been obliged to sell, to support my wretched existence. Now despair is my only companion, and death my only hope!—Yet I tremble to die by the hands of the executioner!—I languish in this neighbourhood, but dare not venture to enter our mansion. I am pursued and traced, spies watch for me in every quarter.—If you love your only brother, grant his last wish, to see you once more before he falls under the sword of his persecutors. To-morrow night, at twelve o'clock, a faithful confidante of mine will expect you at the gate.—If you have courage and love for me, follow her; she will bring you to the arms of your affectionate brother,

“ PHILIP CHEVALIER DE BELLOY.”

Babet trembled as she read this letter. Tears started in her eyes, sisterly affection

tion glowed in her breast. Without the least suspicion she instantly resolved to trust herself with the expected messenger, to put the casket in her pocket, to give her unfortunate brother the half of its contents, and by her tender consolation perhaps save him from self-murder.

She had never seen the hand-writing of the Chevalier ; but though she had been acquainted with it, yet would not the slightest suspicion have arisen in her guileless heart. With anxious impatience she waited the day, and, with tender anxiety, the night. The priest visited her as usual. He hoped she would impart to him what had happened, and the resolution she had taken ; but she was silent. It was not *her* own secret, the care of her brother's safety sealed her lips.

The cunning seducer, however, easily perceived that she laboured under the pressure of secret anxiety, and in her
agitation

agitation he guessed the success of his villainy. In the evening he went away with an air such as the celebrated Catharine de Medicis might have assumed when, for the last time, she visited the unfortunate Coligni. He drew himself up squat in the middle of his net, like a malignant spider, to be ready to spring out on the harmless insect for which he had spread it.

He was no sooner gone than Babet began to pack up her casket ; and after a warm prayer to her guardian saints, in the obscurity of night, accompanied by her faithful servant, she tripped through the court, listened, till she heard a slight noise and coughing at the gate. It was the procureur we have mentioned, who, like a rattle-snake, opened her jaws to swallow the fascinated bird.

When Babet thought she followed, and to what place she was really conducted, we already know.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

LOVE AND GRATITUDE.

AS starts with horror the youth who thinks he is about to kiss the rosy lips of beauty, and suddenly beholds the cancerous cheek of corruption, so did Babet shudder, in wild dismay, when she saw the villain she had begun to respect as a second father, unmasked at her feet. For the first two or three hours she could neither speak, sigh, nor weep. She was first obliged to reflect on the possibility of such a baseness, before she could complain or reproach. The priest was obliged to confess his shameless purpose before she could comprehend what he meant. When she understood his design, however, from impotent resentment she rose, at once, to the height of unspeakable contempt. Her innocence

was

wss so intimately blended with the whole of what constituted *herself*, that she felt that it could be torn from her only with her life. This feeling inspired her with a discretion and courage far beyond her years and her strength. While the hours of night slowly glided by, she remained obstinately dumb, and not a motion of her eye betrayed the smallest interest in what passed around. She paid no attention either to the disgusting talk of the priest, or the wretched consolations of the procurefs. She sat in a kind of trance till morning dawned. When it was day, and she heard at a little distance the shepherd's pipe, she suddenly started up, ran to the window, threw it open, and cried: "Help! help!"

The priest and his female Satan were alarmed at this unexpected movement. They pulled at the struggling maid, who clung with her nails to the window shutters,

ters, and cried with all her might. At last they disengaged her by force, and hurried her into a remote apartment. Here the villain threatened to gag her if she again was so *childish*, as he called it, as to act in this manner. A smile of the most profound contempt was her only answer.

Her cries, meanwhile, had really assembled the shepherds, who were easily satisfied with the story that their priest, whose virtue they never suspected, had, from motives of humanity, taken a lunatic niece into his house, whose disordered understanding he hoped to be able to re-establish. The priest desired the honest peasants to inform their neighbours of this circumstance, that they might not again be alarmed by her cries. Thus every suspicion was obviated. The helpless maid was left in the hands of her spoiler; for she was soon deprived of the company of her faithful

servant, whom they removed out of the way, by confining her fast in a dark cellar.

The priest left none of his hellish arts untried to habituate the mind of Babet to the thoughts of vice. Sometimes he descended to every kind of flattery, and again he endeavoured to alarm her with the basest threats. On the one side he painted to her a life of voluptuousness, if she would consent to live with him as his mistress or his wife, and on the other, an ignominious death, should he give her up as a royalist to the existing authorities. But neither his threats nor his flattery could produce the smallest effect on the pure innocence of the angelic maid.

The experienced procurers endeavoured to inflame her mind by lascivious descriptions, but their pollutions could not stain the mirror of her soul. It was impossible for the wretch to return, even in thought, to the period when she was
innocent ;

innocent; the stories she repeated to Babet were unintelligible mysteries; and when she impudently persisted, Babet shut her ear against her conversation, by a secret and fervent prayer.

The priest began at length to perceive that force alone could enable him to succeed in his infamous design, and he protested to the poor victim, with horrible imprecations, that he was resolved to have recourse to that expedient, if she persisted any longer in scorning his love. She had now no other hope left but in the protection of a higher power. "God of the fatherless and orphan!" did she exclaim in secret prayer, "hast thou deprived me of every aid?—hast thou denied me every instrument of saving my innocence by a voluntary death?—On thy strong arm do I alone depend!—Thou wilt appear to me in the moment of my highest need!"

And he did appear—her protecting

L 2

angel

angel veiled himself in the form of a friend. William appeared at her bedside, as her innocence was on the point of being overpowered.—With the deliverance of Babet's honour just Providence too connected Jeanette's revenge, and the merited punishment for the murder of her child. The priest breathed out his foul spirit, and the last influence which hell exercised over the dying reprobate was to dictate the false declaration that William was a robber, a murderer.—Thus did he descend to the other world ; the hand of his murdered child seized him, and led him dismayed to the tribunal of an offended Judge.

But his villainous accusation remained behind. Every thing testified against William ; the words of the deceased, the cries of the procuress, the broken door, the gagged maid, and lastly his own confusion ; for the sight of his suffering benefactress on the one hand, and of the
detested

detested betrayer of his wife on the other, had struck him dumb with astonishment. Nothing declared in his favour but the voice of Babet, and she was considered out of her senses.

The shepherds, who were attached to the hypocritical priest, loaded William with curses, and almost sacrificed his life to the first dictates of their resentment. It was now clear day, when they conducted him, his hands fast bound, down the hill, and took the road to the town. They told every person they met that this wretched stranger was a disguised royalist, who had murdered a worthy constitutional priest. He was followed by the curses of every traveller, and every boy abused and maltreated him.

Only in the village where William's friends lived did things assume a different appearance. They crowded round the prisoner, were amazed at the

enormity of the charge, doubted the truth of the story, and expressed their sorrow for his situation. The woman whose children he had saved came running up, made her way through the pikes, loudly protested his innocence, threw herself in the way of his conductors, and would not allow them to proceed. William was obliged to comfort her; he entreated her to leave him to his fate, and to trust to the justice of God.

“ Me you cannot save,” whispered he softly, “ but save, at least, the hapless maid who yet is confined in the house of the infamous parson. She is not mad; she will tell you all.”

These words were a mystery to the good woman, but she reflected on them. William was torn away. Not merely fruitless compassion accompanied him, but a number of stout young fellows armed themselves, and hastened to strengthen

strengthen his guard, in order to defend him from the ill usage of the people. In the evening they reached the town. Amidst the shouts and hisses of the people he was thrown into prison, into which not a ray of light could penetrate—but day shone in his soul. He had saved Babet and revenged Jeanette, and he contemplated death with tranquillity.

How indeed could he look at the future with hope?—Even had he appeared innocent of the crime with which he was charged, the people demanded a sacrifice. They shouted day and night round the walls of his prison, and demanded his execution. It was decided. Very little attention was paid to legal formalities, and his trial was only postponed a few days, because the fate of a number of emigrants engrossed the executioner. He availed himself of this interval to write down his justification

with a pencil. He took leave of his wife, and bequeathed his blessing to his child. He then pitched on one of the guards who daily attended him in his cell, whose physiognomy appeared to promise most humanity, and whom he had often observed viewing him with compassionate looks. He conjured him to forward that paper. "I have nothing to offer you," said he, "but if you have a wife and child—"

"I have a wife and child," said the national guard with emotion. He was going to say something more, but he checked himself, took the paper, and withdrew.

The solemn hour at last arrived. On the evening of the third day, William was carried before his judges. All the circumstances testified strongly against him. What he urged in his defence appeared an inconsistent incredible story,
and

and after a short hearing he was condemned to death. The next day was appointed for his execution.

He lay on his bed of straw, with the invaluable consciousness of having never, in the course of his life, been guilty of a dishonourable action. He prayed—but not for himself—he prayed for his wife and child. At midnight he fell into a placid slumber.

The rattling of keys suddenly awaked him. Two soldiers of the national guard entered with a dark lanthorn. William started up, and thought the awful moment was come. In one of the soldiers he recognised the man to whom he had entrusted the last proof of his love for Jeanette. “I am glad,” said William, “that you have been chosen to attend me on this occasion. Be witness of my death, and announce to my wife that I have met it, if not with

perfect tranquillity, at least with firmness."

"Be silent, and follow us," said the soldier, as he raised up his chains to allow him to walk more easily. William followed in silence. They led him through a gloomy passage, which he never before had trod. They reached an open court. The stars glimmered over their heads. William wondered to find that it was yet night. They came to a little door, which stood open. When William went out, he heard the trampling of horses, and soon distinguished a carriage and four. The soldiers assisted him to mount, and took their seats beside him.

Away they drove, full speed. William knew not what they meant to do with him. He asked, but they gave him no answer, and the rattling of the carriage drowned his words. The moon

rose. William looked round into the open fields—he thought it was all a dream.

After they had proceeded about a mile, they came to the high-way, and the carriage suddenly stopped. They obliged him to dismount. When he touched the ground, some person kissed his hand, and bathed it with tears. William looked round—it was the young woman whose children he had saved.—The two soldiers were her husband and brother.

The husband now pressed him to his heart. “You saved my children from the flames,” said he with tears —“I have delivered you from an unmerited death—that was but the duty of a man, now shall I reward you.”

William followed him in silent astonishment; the young woman led him by the hand. A few steps farther something white glittered behind a tree—a

female figure now rushed into his arms.—It was Babet!—Another woman came up, with tottering steps, and seemed scarce able to walk.—Babet pulled her friend along—the stranger stretched out her arms—the moon beamed upon her countenance—through the silence of night he heard his name pronounced—It was *Jeanette*!

CHAP. XVIII.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

IF the author should anticipate objections, and begin this chapter with the observation that “probability is really nothing more than the feasibility or possibility of a thing,” it would seem to infer that he himself entertained doubts of the probability of this most true history. As every thing which happened, however, is pourtrayed to his fancy in the clearest light, and he hopes with the assistance of the muses to sketch it to the reader in no less lively colours, he shall take the liberty, merely to enhance his consequence, to remind the reader that Dubos and Breitenger, Marmontel and Schlegel, are the examples he has followed; and that all these gentlemen have shown him that it is quite conceivable

ceivable and possible that William, Babet, Jeanette, and the worthy peasants should all meet at day-break on the road to Limoges, although the former escaped from his dungeon, and, what is still more difficult, the latter must have eluded the vigilance of a lover. Were the author doubtful of his cause, he would intrench himself behind the example of celebrated poets. The works of many distinguished writers are full of things which no man, with all the inclination in the world, can consider probable. It does not however require this foreign aid to justify the incidents of this history ; for the simplest statement will immediately bring down the reader from the fairy fields of the wonderful into the region of the uncommon, but at the same time very possible.

Gratitude impelled the honest peasants, in contempt of every danger, to attempt William's deliverance. Their
situation

situation as soldiers of the national guard, assisted however with Babet's diamonds, afforded them ready means for the attainment of their purpose. While the husband began the undertaking, the wife, accompanied by her brother, went to the house of the deceased parson, to discover the meaning of William's mysterious request. At first, however, they found none but the old procurefs, who was busy in packing up all the moveables, in order to transfer them to some place of safety. When asked whether there was not a mad girl in the house, she replied, that the poor creature had made her escape. Some degree of confusion, which still lurked behind her unblushing impudence, excited suspicion. The keys were demanded, which she refused.

The woman and her brother agreed to separate, and traverse the whole house from top to bottom, and at every door
they

they found shut to call aloud, to ascertain whether any prisoner would answer. This resolution they immediately carried into effect. The one went up stairs; the other down. In a few minutes they returned, and they had found more than they sought. "Above, there," said the sister, "I heard the voice of complaint." "And below, there," replied the brother; "I heard the sound of groans in the cellar."

The procurefs was now aware of her danger. The honest soldier overtook her just as she was stealing out at the garden-door. She had left behind the heavy and bulky part of the spoil, and contented herself with a small bundle, from which the soldier pulled out a suspicious-looking casket. "To the right about, mistress!" said he in a stern voice, seizing her roughly by the arm: "Give me the keys, or I shall plunge you in the pond."

This

This pond, which was but a few steps distant, and the threatening aspect of the young man, whose flaming eyes promised that he would keep his word, compelled the old serpent to be more compliant. She offered to exchange the keys for the casket; but this was refused, in case any body should be found who had a better claim to it. This hard condition produced a fruitless refusal. The soldier advanced a few paces nearer the pond, and the keys were delivered up.

Joyfully the young woman ascended the stair, and her brother hastily went down to the cellar. The former liberated the languishing Babet, and the latter brought out the half-starved maid-servant. While mutual explanations were going on, and Babet, to the astonishment of the peasants, related her unfortunate story, the old beldame took the opportunity of their confusion to make her escape. She made off without

out the booty of the casket, but provided with accomplishments by which she every where earned a subsistence, till at last, under Carrier's administration at Nantes, she again rose to be a woman of consequence.

Babet was unable to give any satisfactory account of her fate till she heard that William was alive, and that hopes were entertained of his deliverance. With joy she offered the contents of her casket to contribute to that object, an offer which, in case of necessity, they promised to accept. She accompanied her deliverers to their rural hut, there to await the result of the dangerous enterprise, and to pray for the life of her friend.

We have left poor Jeanette in a very critical situation; and if it is considered what in these times a mayor might have attempted with impunity, we must be alarmed for her fate. Besides her own
 . grief,

grief, that of an amiable young woman likewise lay heavy upon her heart; for Beaublanc's wife could no longer conceal that the new infidelity of her husband was no secret to her. She indeed was perfectly conscious to herself that Jeanette's conduct was entirely unexceptionable. The fair stranger, however, still was the destroyer of her peace, and she could not love her. She showed her all the attentions which her misfortunes and the duties of hospitality demanded; but the cordial kindness which seasons all these attentions it was not in her power to display. A cold politeness was all she could bestow, which to noble minds is not less galling than open hate.

They at last only met at table; they saluted each other coldly; they talked only of the most indifferent subjects, and both were glad when the dessert was introduced. Beaublanc himself played a very awkward part. The more he felt
the

the impropriety of his conduct, the more he endeavoured, as men usually do, to justify it to himself by imputing it to causes in which he was not to blame. The cold behaviour of his wife he did not overlook, and he reproached her for it when they were alone. She answered him only with tears, which still more displeased him. In a word, the part which the different persons had to support was now become so serious, that a melancholy catastrophe was justly to be apprehended, when a beneficent *deus ex machina* appeared upon the stage.

One evening Jeanette heard a carriage drive up to the door, to which at first she paid no attention. When immediately on its arrival, however, she heard the whole house in motion; when she heard baggage brought up stairs, and Beaublanc's children skipping about in great joy, she asked the servant who brought her a light, whether any company

pany was come ?—" Our master's grandmother," said the man.

The news was very agreeable to Jeanette, partly because she hoped that Beaublanc in presence of his grandmother would be more attentive to his wife, partly because, in a company of persons who are intimately acquainted with each other's affairs, a stranger is always welcome, because it gives some relief to the conversation. Jeanette, therefore, when summoned to supper, went down with more ease and courage than she had done for several weeks. She saw upon the sofa a venerable matron, who rose on her entrance, and, with that amiable frankness which age is entitled to display, came to meet her. Beaublanc presented the old lady to her with the words, " My grandmother, madame Jerome."

" Madame Jerome !" stammered Jeanette, and grew pale.—" Madame Jerome !"

come!" she repeated with an earnestness which struck the company.

"You appear to know that name," said the lady; "I flatter myself that it is not disagreeable to you."

"Disagreeable! No. Jerome was my father's name."

Beaublanc appeared surprised. The old lady started. With visible anxiety she rubbed her hands, and said: "You are a German?"

"My father," continued Jeanette, "was a Frenchman, who had left his country for more than twenty years."

"His surname?"

"Joseph Aimé."

"Great God!" exclaimed the old lady—her knees shook—she sunk in Beaublanc's arms. In a word, we need no longer conceal what the reader must have anticipated: she was Jeanette's grandmother, and the mayor was Jeanette's cousin german.

Extra

Extravagance and irregular conduct had formerly irritated the old lady against her son ; she banished him from her presence, and by her severity compelled him to seek his fortune in foreign countries. Necessity—the great master which leads its pupils either to virtue, or drives them to despair—had reclaimed the prodigal to the path of order and of industry. He did not choose, however, to communicate any intelligence of himself to his mother till he had accumulated as much property as should enable him to dispense with all assistance from his relations, in order that she might have no foundation for thinking that he only feigned repentance for the sake of her money. When this moment arrived, he wrote the most tender and affecting letters. A series of years, however, had elapsed ; his family had experienced various vicissitudes. From Picardy, where they formerly resided, they
had,

had, on account of accidents unconnected with this history, gone to reside in Languedoc; his letters, therefore, never reached the place of their destination.

His fruitless expectation of an answer from his mother long embittered his domestic happiness. He could ascribe her silence only to two causes: either his mother was irreconcilable, or she was dead. The former his heart disclaimed; he wept over her therefore as no more, and ceased to write.

Madame Jerome, on the other hand, had long since forgotten her resentment; for the resentment of a mother is like a flake of snow in the month of May. She reproached herself bitterly for her harshness. In the sleepless hours of night she wept her lost son; she saw him wandering in the world poor and abandoned. With what joy would she have called him back! but in what region of the globe

globe was she to seek him?—With what anxiety did she expect some filial application from him!—But he was silent.—How often did she invite him by public advertisements in the newspapers to return! They never reached him. Was it possible that he, who, in spite of his levity and wildness, was so affectionate towards her, could remain so long silent?—Ah! no! he is dead! he has fallen a sacrifice to his mother's unnatural severity!

This reproach, which incessantly preyed on her maternal heart, threw a gloom over her evening of life—and now to be so delightfully awaked from this disagreeable dream! True, indeed, her Joseph was gone!—but he had lived happily, and he had left behind a youthful representative who fondly called her *Mother*; a being of her own flesh and blood, and of whom she had reason to be proud.

Every thing in the house now assumed a quite different aspect. Beaublanc ceased to be an object of dread, since his consanguinity dictated to him new duties, and the presence of his grandmother imposed upon him a salutary restraint. He was ashamed when he reflected that madame Jerome had a right to say to him : " Baptiste, remember with what ardour you sued to obtain your wife ; think what I did and sacrificed to enable you to succeed." He trembled to think that his wife might complain of his conduct, and in what light he must then appear to a mother, to whom he was indebted for so many favours ; one, too, whom amidst all his errors he had ever continued to love with filial affection.

Jeanette at last completed his reformation by a step which was now easy for her, since she considered Beaublanc as her cousin, and was secure in the protection

tection of her grandmother. She sought what formerly she had so carefully avoided, an opportunity of being alone with him. She even led the conversation to a circumstance which she formerly did not wish to seem to perceive, his passion for her. She then spoke with such interest to his heart; she painted the sorrow of his wife and her own with such truth and feeling; she mingled such cordial assurances of friendship and gratitude with her delicate reproaches, that he threw himself at her feet quite overcome, and with tears of the most sincere repentance entreated her to forget his improper conduct.

The first moments of repentance derive a peculiar strength from that virtue which is ever ready to unite in the bands of cordial affection, when it observes the least advances to amendment. Beau-blanc felt in himself a spirit which animated him with a serene joy, to which

he had long been a stranger. He was happy to feel that it cost him no pangs to prepare what was necessary for Jeanette's departure. A few days, indeed, she was obliged to spend with her newly-discovered grandmother; but the good old lady was too considerate to require more than a few days, under the condition however that Jeanette, with her husband and child, should visit her as soon as the troubles of the republic allowed her to do it with safety.

Doubly reimbursed by liberal presents for all she had lost by the violence of the populace; furnished with passports which perfectly secured her safety, with the delightful idea of having re-established the domestic felicity of her amiable hosts, she proceeded on her journey to Guienne.

CHAP. XIX.

THE PLOT IS UNFOLDED.

HOW delightful are the feelings of the traveller, who, after a long absence, discovers at a distance the lofty spires of a city, in which reside those on whom his heart hangs with fondness! Now agitated with alarm, now animated with hope, he feels the sweetest elation of joy. Every peasant he meets returning from the market, every citizen going out when his work is finished to his cabbage garden, he is inclined to ask: "Know you into whose embraces I am hastening?—Is he happy and well?"

How peevish he feels at every crooked turning of the road! how he curses the phlegm of the postillion, who, so near the end of his journey, stops to fasten his stirrup, or to take a glass of beer at some

obscure inn ! He whose whole being is absorbed in the idea of meeting those he loves, is insensible to hunger and thirst. Now the whip cracks and the horses fly along, the carriage rolls down the hill, and the soul far outstrips its speed. O severe trial of patience ! A tract of heavy sand yet remains to pass, and the horses again move slowly on. Now he sits, and with both his hands seizes the carriage door, pushes it on as if to assist its rapidity. Every moment he thrusts his head out at the window to measure the extent of the sand, which seems to stretch to infinity like the deserts of Sahara.

Such were the feelings which agitated Jeanette's breast when she approached the town in which she expected to find her husband. At last she reached the gate, and had a new delay to encounter. Her passport must be examined. It availed nothing here that nature had written the passport of virtue and innocence

cence upon her brow ; this might have availed her only on the banks of the Ohio, or Hudson's Bay. Captious objections were advanced ; her person was to be compared with the description. Formalities and ceremonies of every kind were to be observed. Here an officer of the municipality thought he discharged his duty well in proportion to the time he consumed ; there an officer of the police thought that the colour of her eyes did not exactly correspond with the original.

Every thing was at last adjusted, passport and baggage were stamped with the seal of liberty. The postillion slowly mounted his horse, and, looking back, enquired where madame chose to alight ?

“ At the first good inn,” replied Jeanette hastily ; and the carriage rolled heavily through the streets. The principal street was full of men ; the windows were likewise crowded with spec-

tators.—Jeanette saw nobody; she looked only for William's face. The people seemed in great agitation; the words murderer and guillotine were re-echoed through the mob.—Jeanette was quite inattentive to every thing; she had no ears but for William's voice. With a light spring she jumped out of the carriage when it stopped at the gate of an inn. A gossiping hostess conducted her up stairs, and immediately began to entertain her with the news of the day. She told her that a prisoner of war, an officer, had murdered a constitutional priest, and violated his niece; that he had been thrown into prison, and probably in a short time would receive his deserts under the guillotine.

Jeanette started at the words prisoner of war, but instantly laid aside her fear when she heard the nature of the crime of which he was accused. "He has dined at my table," said the prattling hostess;

hostess; "he appeared so quiet, well-behaved a young man, that I would not have scrupled to have trusted him either with my strong box or my daughter. But still waters are deep—Brave he may be, as he wears a cross, and they call him major."

Jeanette stood petrified, and the blood forsook her cheeks.—"A cross?—Major?—What is his name?"

Alas! he had a very hard German name; the hostess could not pronounce it. "But how did he look?"—She described his person feature for feature. It was easy to see that William had sat for the picture. From Jeanette's pale lips dropped the name of Eichenwald! and—"Right!" interrupted the hostess—"Right! Eichenwald is the very name!"

Poor Jeanette sunk to the ground; night obscured her eyes; her pulse at her heart ceased to beat, and a convulsive movement of her lips was the only

symptom of life. The hostess in terrible alarm, invoking all the saints to her aid, contributed all the assistance in her power. " Ah ! my God ! Ah ! poor madame !" she repeated an hundred times, and tears of sympathy burst from her eyes when she heard that the lady before her was the wife of the unfortunate prisoner.

She immediately shut the door, that the populace might not hear of the discovery, and confound innocence with guilt. But Jeanette became delirious : she insisted on going out—she would throw herself at the feet of the judges—in the public market-place protest the innocence of her husband.—The good-natured hostess was obliged to detain her by force, was obliged to stifle her cries by shutting the windows, and repeat to her a thousand times that her interference would only accelerate the fate of her husband. When at last Jeanette's

nette's strength was exhausted; when she lay breathless on the sofa, and her tears, which passion had suppressed, began to steal slowly down her cheeks, she began to listen to the consolation of the hostess.

"I fain would believe," said the kind-hearted old woman, "that he is not guilty of the shocking crime; I wish to believe it because you love him so well; and truly I have a good opinion of him myself, for many a day has he sat soberly and quietly at my table: but of what avail is his innocence?—Alas! madame, innocence does nothing for us now-a-days. Either appearances are against him, or he has powerful enemies; nothing but money can save him."

Jeanette hastily pointed to her coffer.

"I understand you," proceeded the hostess; "you have money; you will sacrifice all?"

Jeanette nodded assent, and her feeble

tongue in vain attempted to pronounce the word "all."

"Make yourself easy therefore awhile; I shall put on my cloak, and mingle in the crowd, to hear what is the state of matters. If he is innocent, that God who protected Daniel in the lion's den will not forsake him, and will discover us means for his deliverance."

With these words she went out, and left Jeanette in the most agonising tortures. The first evening the hostess did not succeed in discovering any thing favourable to the prisoner. Jeanette's situation bordered on phrensy; a fever preyed upon her frame, and in the morning she was delirious. The hostess never stirred from her bed-side; as soon as it was day she committed her to the care of her daughter, and hastened out on an errand of humanity to seek the balm of hope.

About

About noon she returned with a soldier of the national guard, whom she brought with a mysterious air to Jeanette's bed-side. "This brave man," whispered she to the patient, "is one of your husband's guards."—Jeanette rose, and hastily seized the stranger's hand. Her eyes were hot and enflamed, but tears refused to flow.

"Madame," said the soldier, "your situation would affect me had I no other motive to venture my life for your husband."—Jeanette made a signal to the hostess to reach the chest, which stood at the foot of the bed. She opened it, and it was full of money. With a melancholy, affecting look of entreaty, she presented it to the soldier, who rejected it with some displeasure.

"Madame," said he with the accents of offended generosity, "your husband threw himself into the flames to save my children.

children. I hope that is enough to induce you to shut up your strong box. Here is my hand, I shall save your husband's life, or die with him."

Jeanette attempted to kiss his hand ; tears of gratitude again rushed to her eyes ; a fervent look to heaven spoke her thanks to God and her deliverer.— When the beams of hope, like an electrical shock, restored her the use of her tongue, and she again was able to speak, she pressed upon the generous soldier as much as was necessary for the payment of all expences ; but he insisted that he alone must answer these, should it cost him his last sixpence.

She now asked pen and ink to write a note to her husband to announce her arrival, and communicate to him consolation in his dungeon. The soldier, however, refused to carry the letter. He would not even undertake to inform the
prisoner

prisoner of Jeanette's arrival, because it was to be feared that his joy might betray him.

"Patience!" said the generous young man, "patience till to-morrow, or the day after; by that time it will be decided. Meanwhile this good woman will bring you as soon as it is night to the village where I reside. There you may remain in tranquillity in my house, and wait the result."

"In tranquillity!" sighed Jeanette.

The soldier endeavoured to raise her spirits, informed the hostess what way she should take, and hastened back to his post to avoid suspicion. Regardless of her fever and her weakness, Jeanette prepared for her departure; and when night spread its shades over the earth, she set out in company with her worthy hostess, and about midnight reached the young woman's cottage. She was received

ceived as the wife of her benefactor, and in Babet she found a sister.

What passed in the heart of the lovely maid when she so suddenly saw the wife of her beloved appear, those who are acquainted with the human heart may conceive. Her attachment, however, was too pure and innocent to permit the smallest feeling of jealousy. She saw only William's danger; she forgot her wishes, her dreams, and clung to a being who prayed as fervently as herself for his deliverance.

God heard the prayers of these kindred spirits. On the evening of the third day they received a message, to repair at midnight to a rendezvous on the road to Limoges. Trembling they set out—Silently they kneeled on the grass, and started at every rustling of the leaves. Their hearts beat high when they heard at a distance the sound of a carriage.—

When

When it came nearer and nearer—when it stopped—the young woman flew like lightning to the road—Babet hastened after her—and Jeanette tottered between hope and fear till she could go no farther, and sunk into the arms of her husband.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

THE FLIGHT.

THE reader will not be greatly surprised that our hero, at the scene before him, which seemed altogether so miraculous, began to think whether his head was not separated from his body, and those he saw were not the visionary shades of Elysium hovering round him? — The explanation of the mystery, however, upon a public and well frequented road, might be dangerous. The brave soldier roused William from his dream, and led him into the thicket, where a large open cart waited for them, furnished with every thing that was necessary to facilitate their flight.

In ten minutes William was freed from his irons. Instead of his uniform,
 he

he put on a coarse frock, and his hair he tied up under a red cap. Jeanette and Babet were likewise obliged to bind up their waving locks in a less conspicuous form. Coarse handkerchiefs concealed what their fashionable corsets threatened to betray; short clumsy coats disguised the graces of their person, and monstrous wooden shoes covered their elegant feet.

Already Jeanette and Babet had taken leave of their kind hosts, with tears. William had assisted them into the carriage, and was himself about to follow, when an unexpected discovery changed his resolution, and almost determined him voluntarily to return to his prison. Till now it had never occurred to him, in the flutter of spirits into which he had been thrown, to enquire who was his conductor; and for the first time he was fully aware of the extent of the sacrifice
which

which gratitude had led the worthy rustics to make.

The soldier had retired a few steps with his wife. William saw how anxiously she clung round his neck ; he heard her sob, and ask when she should see him again ?—He heard her husband comforting her in broken accents ; he heard him blessing her and his children, promising to return as soon as he could venture it without risk of his life.—The poor woman could not tear herself away ; she still hung upon him to take her last embrace, till her husband whispered her : “ Think of the fire, and our duty ! ”—She then let him go.

“ God protect you ! ” said he, and went away.—His wife remained standing and wringing her hands.—“ No ! ” cried William with emotion—“ No ! I cannot purchase my life at such a price. If my deliverance must render you a
helpless

helpless fugitive, your wife a widow, and your children orphans, I should a thousand times rather return to my cell, and meet death to-morrow."

These words diffused terror through the whole party. Babet and Jeanette rose up from their seats, the soldier stopped, his wife immediately dried up her tears, and stifled her sighs.—"What do you mean?" began the soldier in firm voice. "Take your place quietly in the carriage. The step which puts my life in danger cannot be recalled. Suppose even that you were to return to your prison, it might now be more difficult to get into it unobserved than it was to get out. You must already be missed. If not, you cannot reach the town before day-break; and then it must be just as fatal to your guard, whether you really escaped, or only attempted it by his connivance. Away then, without losing a moment! My wife and child I com-
mit

mit to the protection of God and my brother, who was not present with me on the post, and consequently has nothing to answer for. I will conduct you to the frontiers, and there remain till the tyrant of my country is overthrown, which sooner or later must happen, as I know the temper of my comrades. Justice will then have time to breathe again, and it will no longer be reckoned criminal to obey the dictates of gratitude and humanity.—Away then, and God be with us !”

He seized the reins, and leaped into the saddle. William, though his alarms were not banished, was convinced by his arguments, that now to recede would nothing diminish the dangers to which the gallant fellow was exposed ; he resigned himself to necessity, seated himself by Jeanette’s side, and the carriage drove on.

Had I *Louvet’s* pen to paint the dan-

ger of this flight, the description would answer the fearful expectation of the reader. Often would he remain breathless with anxiety, and stretch every fibre of attention.—Five nights they travelled through unfrequented roads, known only to their guide. During the day they concealed themselves in woods and deep retired valleys among the mountains. Twice did the harness break in passing over the rocks. On the third night they lost their way, and at dawn they saw, with terror and astonishment, the lofty spires of a large town at a little distance; and as they suddenly turned the horses to shun this danger, one of them dropped down dead.

The courage of the men and the firmness of the women at last overcame all dangers. The morning sun of the fifth day dawned as they entered the frontiers of Switzerland. In vain Jeanette opened her purse, and Babet her casket,

casket, to supply their generous guide, at least with what was necessary to secure him from want during his exile. "I can work," said he—"Industry and honesty are welcome every where. If you would alleviate the pain of separation from my family, give me nothing, in order that while I follow my labour I may have the consoling reflection that I have done well."

About noon, William with his fair companions reached a town, where they resolved to recruit themselves after the many difficulties they had encountered. There their hearts, for the first time, opened to easy unembarrassed conversation. Fear no longer sealed their lips, no dangers now obliterated the remembrance of the past, or clouded their hopes of the future.

Jeanette had now an opportunity to enquire with cordial sympathy the history of her husband's friend ; and William

liam availed himself of this occasion to relate, in Babet's presence, the state of his heart. He gained this advantage by the step, that he was not obliged to address himself to Babet, and she could blush in silence, as the looks of her friend were too delicate to dwell on her ingenuous shame.

He now painted Frederick's passion in the most glowing colours, expatiated with eloquence on all the amiable qualities which the reserve of his friend had rendered him incapable of displaying, and concluded with the ardent wish (which he addressed to heaven, and not to Babet) that the lovely creature might one day reward the first love of a man of honour by a mutual attachment.

Babet was silent, and fixed her eyes on the ground. What really passed in her heart it is impossible for us to unfold. All that she heard, however, connected with the impossibility of possessing the

man who had made the first impression on her heart, and now spoke so warmly for another, combined too with her helpless situation in a foreign land, produced no disadvantageous impression on her mind to Frederick's pretensions.

William now was silent, and left the rest to his wife, to whom he made a significant sign to second the wishes of Babet, convinced that in such cases a woman is the best agent that can be employed.

CHAP. XXI.

THE TYRANNY OF HONOUR.

TWO days had now elapsed. Repose and anxiety to see her child had armed Jeanette with new strength. For some days past she had observed a cloud on William's brow, the cause of which she was unable to explain; and she hoped, by a speedy departure, to restore his wonted serenity. She entreated him, therefore, to make preparations to set out next morning, and he promised to comply.

This promise indeed appeared to cost him some pain. He seemed reluctantly to make preparations for the journey; and the evening previous to their intended departure he was uncommonly pensive; melancholy clouded his open countenance. Jeanette's eye dwelt upon

him with anxious looks; but as she could not devise the reason, and he studiously evaded her enquiries, she contented herself in the expectation that time would unravel the mystery, and banished her uneasy apprehensions with the thoughts of soon seeing her infant.

The morning came. Jeanette awoke, but William was gone. On the day of their departure so many things were to be arranged that at first she was not surpris'd. She leaped out of bed, and went into the adjoining room, to awake Babet, and began very busily to pack up her baggage.

Breakfast was brought up, and with it the waiter delivered her a sealed letter. She glanced over it, and turned pale—the address was William's hand-writing. With trembling hands she basily broke the seal, and read as follows:

“My dearest wife! It is not in my power to return with you. I am bound
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by my word of honour, and I must perform it. For the sake of my comrades who still remain in captivity, I must not abuse the indulgence for which we pledged our honour. Be easy, however. I do not intend to deliver myself up to the frantic deluded people. There are still in France men of worth, who will protect me till the expected exchange takes place. Be not offended at the step I have thus taken. I am indeed a husband and a father, but I am likewise a citizen and a soldier. I cannot appear in my native land as a dishonoured runaway. I cannot enjoy happiness in your arms if I violate my word. If my joyful presages do not deceive me, we shall soon meet again. Proceed in your journey—may it be happy! Carry my blessing to our child. I leave you far from the theatre of war, and your road home is quite secure. You have an amiable companion, a faithful ser-

vant, and more money than you will require. I am easy therefore. Proceed on your journey, then, this very day. Every thing is ready. Forbear all fruitless attempts to discover me. When you receive this letter I shall be upon the territories of France. Take the shortest way home—do not plunge yourself into new dangers; think of our deserted child.—Heaven guide you, and shorten our separation !”

To see a thunderbolt from the unclouded sky suddenly shiver to pieces the lofty oak by his side, would less astonish the affrighted traveller than this letter amazed Jeanette. Pale and trembling she handed the letter to Babet. “ Ah ! William, William, what hast thou done ?—You are going to a land where the laws of nations afford no protection—to a land where noble sentiments are despised, where the few who yet are animated by principles of humanity

nity must bend under the iron rod of tyranny ; and can I then be easy ?—A thousand dangers have I defied—through difficulties innumerable, through frightful precipices did I press to find thee—yet again you abandon me !—Ah ! William, what hast thou done ?”

Thus did she lament under the heavy load of her anguish, and was inaccessible to the cold consolations of her friend. Her spirits quite exhausted, unable to turn her attention to any object, she did unconsciously whatever she was desired ; consented, without being sensible of what she did, to Babet's request that they should leave this melancholy spot. She followed her into the carriage, seated herself in silence, and neither asked nor cared whither they were going.

When she began again to breathe her native air, when they passed the frontiers of Germany, Babet succeeded in rousing her from her stupor, by remind-

ing her of her child. At last, when they had advanced within a day's journey of the place of their destination, the feelings of the wife yielded to those of the mother; her imagination painted the little smiling William stretching out his arms to her. She calculated in idea how much he had grown; she heard the new words he had learnt to lisp, and rejoiced in the thought that in spite of her long absence he would still know his mother.

It was evening when they reached a little town only two short stages from the object of her tender anxiety. As they had pursued their journey day and night without repose, the wearied Babet here wished to enjoy a few hours sleep; and in this wish she was confirmed by the representations of the landlord, who told them that there was a wood in their way through which it was very unsafe to pass. "A desperate band," said he, "consisting

sisting of German deserters, Dutch run-aways, and French refugees, have collected here, and render travelling very dangerous. The neighbourhood of the frontier favours their designs. Dreadful stories of robbery and murder are circulated, which perhaps may be exaggerated, but yet are terrible enough if you believe only one half of them. Government, it is said, however, is making preparations to put an end to the disorder, and a strong party of soldiers is to be sent to surround the wood, and to hunt the robbers from their retreats." Whether the detachment had yet arrived, whether the attempt had yet been made to clear the wood, and with what success, the landlord could not tell, and he thought it very dangerous for the travellers to proceed, especially by night.

The timorous Babet agreed with the host, and reminded her friend of Wil-

liam's recommendation to expose herself to no new dangers. Maternal anxiety, however, overcame every apprehension ; for a mother's love knows no fear. Jeanette had formed to herself so delightful an idea of embracing, at day-break, her sleeping babe—it was clear moon-light—and the host himself had confessed that precautions were taken by government for the safety of travellers. Rumour too magnified the danger ; the wood was already cleared of its desperate inhabitants, and such frightful tales were commonly circulated, like stories of apparitions, to frighten the timorous. In a word, her maternal anxiety overcame the fears of her friend, and, lighted by the rising moon, they proceeded on their journey.

Their confidence was increased, when at the distance of half a mile from the fatal wood they met a traveller on horse-

back, who had rode through it unmolested, and who communicated to them: the agreeable intelligence, that in the morning two companies of grēnadiers: had been drawn out, and had invested: the wood on every side.

CHAP. XXII.

THE ROBBERS.

IT would be an interesting subject for the curious in the phenomena of the human mind, to investigate why the soul expands itself in open and luminous situations, and the flame of courage burns then more bright; why, on the contrary, in the gloomy recesses of a rocky cliff, or the obscurity of a shaggy wood, the breast seems contracted, and the frame is agitated by an involuntary horror.

As long as the road stretched through cultivated fields, and here and there the village dog was heard to bark, the travellers felt no apprehension. When the fatal wood, however, blacker and blacker, skirted the horizon before them; when they began to enter upon it, and

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the solitary trees gradually thickened into an impenetrable grove, through which the beams of the moon could not pass, they began to conceive some degree of alarm. An anxious silence prevailed in the carriage—every accidental rustling among the leaves, every deceitful shadow of the trees, struck them with dismay.

At little intervals the wood sometimes opened, and displayed little spots, on which the gentle light of the moon shone unclouded. They breathed more freely when they came to such places. After they for near an hour had been tortured by secret terror, Babet first ventured to whisper to her friend the agreeable hope that probably they should very soon reach the extremity of the wood. Hardly had she said this, however, when a shrill whistle from a thicket on their left hand sounded so frightfully through the silence of night, that they started up.

up. The signal was repeated at a little distance before them in the same shrill note, and immediately they heard the trampling of horses, and the sound of human voices.

“God protect us!” said the postillion, and crossed himself. In trembling broken accents Jeanette endeavoured to comfort her companion with the hope that perhaps it was the grenadiers who were in search of the robbers, and who guarded the road. But at this moment a shot which levelled the postboy confirmed all their fears. The carriage was surrounded, and the ladies screamed for help. One of the robbers mounted upon a stately charger advanced to the door with a pistol in his hand; he spoke to them in French, and ordered them, as they prized their lives, to observe a strict silence. One of his companions pulled down Peter from the coach-box; another leaped into the saddle, and drove the

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the carriage into the wood. The robbers surrounded it on all sides; two of them stood behind, and one rode before, to guide it through the rough, unformed path.

Scarcely had they advanced two hundred paces, when the carriage struck violently against some felled timber, and broke the axle-tree. The robbers swore; the ladies trembled; nothing remained to be done but to take the animate as well as inanimate booty out of the carriage, and leave it. This the robbers instantly resolved to do; twenty hands were employed in removing the baggage; and the person on horseback, who appeared the commander of the gang, came up and politely requested the ladies to dismount. They were obliged to obey.

He immediately quitted them again to superintend his companions, and to hasten the business. Jeanette and Babet

fat

sat down upon the mossy stump of a tree, and were obliged to look on and see their little property thrown about and plundered. Most of it was heaped upon poor Peter's shoulders, and when he groaned under the burden they stimulated him with lashes. In a very few minutes the robbers had emptied the carriage, and shaken the lining to see whether any thing was concealed.

They immediately put the cavalcade in motion, and the ladies at first believed that the robbers would content themselves with the booty, and leave them behind in the wood, as nobody seemed to take any concern about them. Their situation was so distressing, that the frightful alternative of remaining alone in the heart of the pathless wood seemed preferable, and Jeanette in secret breathed a fervent prayer that they might be left; for a mother can find her way through a wilderness to her child. Of this

this wretched hope, however, they were deprived. Two saddled horses were brought, and a signal was made that they should mount and follow the rest of the party as fast as possible.

They declined with abundance of tears, and both declared that they had never in their lives been on horseback ; that they would rather follow on foot ; but their entreaties were fruitless. A dozen of rude fellows surrounded them, and with coarse jests promised to take care and keep them from falling. When the ladies still refused, they seized them rudely, and placed them on horseback by force.

At this moment a volley of musket shot poured in among them ; the balls whistled about Jeanette's ears. Two of the robbers who stood beside her fell dead ; others severely wounded crept away deeper into the thicket.

The whole wood seemed suddenly to
be

be animated. Thundering cries resounded through the trees. "*This way! this way!*" cried a man on horseback, who cut his way through the bushes with his sabre. Behind him grenadiers' caps glanced in the light of the moon.

The robbers who had gone before threw down their booty when they heard the firing, seized their arms, and assembled courageously round their leader, who boldly advanced to meet the soldiers. A furious engagement began, which was rendered still more dreadful by the darkness of the night, and the narrow space within which the combatants were confined. Jeanette and her companion were almost as much exposed to danger as those engaged. They attempted to fly, but on all sides they were surrounded by the sanguinary conflict. Balls struck the trees by their side, and wounded men dropped down at their feet.

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The robbers exceeded the soldiers in number, and the latter began to retreat, still maintaining a running fight. By this movement the ladies were involved in the middle of the crowd. The officer who commanded them was wounded. His horse received a shot, and reeled—he leaped to the ground just beside Babet, who lay trembling on her knees, and with a sigh stammered the words, “I can do no more!”

“My God!” exclaimed Babet as she wrung her hands, and threw her tearful eyes to heaven. At these words, the wounded man looked up, screamed “Babet! Babet!” and plunged anew into the battle. That sweet name seemed instantaneously to have closed his wounds, and manned his arms with supernatural strength. His sword flashed destruction among the robbers, and at last he reached their valiant leader, with whom he maintained an unequal combat. He was on
foot,

foot, the latter was on horseback. He was exhausted with loss of blood, his antagonist was unhurt; he attacked him however with undaunted courage, and disputed every inch of ground with the captain of the robbers, whose horse and undiminished vigour gave him every advantage.

Alas! he was again driven back to Babet's feet—covered with new wounds he sunk down beside her, and exclaimed, "Here will I die with pleasure!"—The stranger was bending forwards to cleave his head, when the sight of Babet again seemed to be endued with an inexplicable charm. "Babet!" cried the robber, and his uplifted arm dropped nerveless. "Babet!" repeated he; then leaped hastily from his horse, seized the kneeling maid, and hurried her through the crowd deeper into the thicket. The officer lay unable to move, or to make the least opposition to this attempt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE DELIVERER.

SCARCELY had Babet thus, without her consent, quitted the spot where robbers and soldiers contended with equal courage and doubtful fortune, when the scene suddenly changed. An officer at the head of twenty hussars started suddenly from the thicket, fell like thunder upon the robbers, and in a moment decided the victory. All that were able to fly took to flight. The place was covered with killed and wounded. Those who in the attempt to retreat were taken prisoners, were bound.

The officer leaped from his horse, hastily traversed the field of battle, found Jeanette, who lay senseless under an oak, and threw himself down beside her.—She
 sighed—

sighed—she opened her eyes, and found herself in William's arms !

Astonishment and joy deprived her of speech. She could not ask what miracle had sent her husband as her deliverer. She could only feel an unspeakable joy, and this feeling venting itself in tears, she hung on his neck and wept.

The groans of a wounded man attracted his attention, and roused William from the delightful transports into which he was thrown. He looked round, saw a man lying weltering in his blood—looked again—started with affright—and sunk down overpowered with grief by the side of the sufferer.—It was Frederick—his friend, who knew him not ; for the night of death sat heavy on his eyes.

“ Help ! help ! ” cried William with great emotion, and pulled out his handkerchief to bind up the wounds, which bled violently. Jeanette, too, came up
and

and uttered a piercing shriek, when she recognised the pale countenance of the gallant youth.

The soldiers desisted from the pursuit of the robbers, returned, and hastily made up two litters of twigs; gently placed the wounded man upon the one, and the exhausted Jeanette upon the other, and bore them with cautious steps through the wood. The hussars drove the prisoners before them. William rode slowly beside the litters, and a thousand conflicting emotions agitated his breast. When he looked at the wife he had saved from such danger, he was filled with a melancholy joy; but when he turned to his dying friend, and heard Jeanette's lamentations for the lost Babet, his pleasure in being the deliverer of his wife was cruelly embittered.

At day-break they reached the extremity of the wood, and with it a village; where, though destitute of every accommodation,

modation, they were obliged to remain, for the wounded man could not endure to be moved any farther. William immediately dispatched a hussar to the next town to call surgeons. They came about noon, and to William's unspeakable joy declared that none of his friend's wounds were mortal. They pledged themselves for his recovery, and said, that the only dangerous circumstance was the weakness which the loss of so much blood had occasioned.

The parson of the parish, a benevolent old man, now came to the inn, and with the kindest hospitality made an offer of his house for the accommodation of the patient. The offer was gratefully accepted, and Frederick, after the first dressing was taken off, with permission of the surgeon was removed. The good old man prepared the best and quietest room in the house for his reception; and with the most tender anxiety produced
whatever

whatever his kitchen, his cellar, and his little domestic medicine chest could furnish.

In the evening Frederick again became perfectly sensible. He could not speak, however, but he smiled complacently when he saw his friend sitting at his bed-side. He smiled, too, when he saw Jeanette busied going backwards and forwards; and his eye glanced with looks of anxiety round the room, as if he still sought another object. William understood this look, and with a significant gesture asked his wife, Whether Babet was yet asleep?—Jeanette nodded assent, but she was forced to turn aside to conceal the rising tear. This little deception produced a happy effect upon Frederick; he seemed to be perfectly satisfied, and soon after fell asleep.

By the fatigues of her journey, and the terrors she had sustained the preceding night, Jeanette was so exhausted that

she was scarce able to move. William was almost as much worn out ; but he resolved this night to watch by his friend's bed-side, and insisted that his wife should return and enjoy the repose she so much required in the adjoining room. One of the surgeons likewise remained with Frederick. As the patient, however, seemed to sleep quietly, the surgeon fell asleep also. William continued awake ; and the remembrance of all his wonderful adventures furnished his mind with such copious subject of meditation, as enabled him to resist the attacks of sleep.

A little after midnight he heard repeated knocks at the door ; but as the room where the sick man lodged was at the back of the house, and the knocking could not disturb the repose of his friend, he took no farther notice of it. In a short time, however, his attention was attracted by the noise increasing, by the sound of people passing and repassing,
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and talking at a distance. Not long after, some one stepped up to the door of the room, and knocked softly. William went out, and found the parson with a light in his hand, who told him that a beautiful young lady with a casket under her arm had come to his house on foot, and had called him up to speak with him. As she, however, spoke nothing but French, and he did not understand that language, he had conducted her to his closet, and taken the liberty to call him as an interpreter. The lady appeared very uneasy, and was bathed in tears.

William hastened to awake the surgeon, and followed the old man with a presentiment which did not deceive him; for, when the door opened, Babet flew into his arms!—William's unexpected appearance gave her extreme joy a tincture of wildness. She now considered herself completely saved when she found

herself again under the protection of a beloved friend. She laughed, wept, sighed, prayed, and for a long time could not utter a coherent sentence. At last she enquired first for Jeanette—and then, with visible emotion, for Frederick, whom, in the confusion of the fight, she had too well recognised when he dropped at her feet, and his last words, “Here will I die with pleasure!” still vibrated in her ears.

After William had given her a favourable answer to all her enquiries, and had somewhat settled her spirits by a composing draught, he expressed a wish to know by what lucky adventure she had so unexpectedly appeared?—Babet, however, laid her finger on her mouth—she remained silent—her eyes lost their fire—and, after taking two or three turns through the room, she seized William’s hand, and entreated him never again to distress her with this question.

William

William could not comprehend the cause of this refusal ; but as she repeated her entreaty in the most fervent tone, and he was not accustomed to pry into other people's secrets, he desisted from all enquiry. The parson, too, could give no clue to the mystery. The servant could only tell that when Babet knocked, a carriage, surrounded by several men on horseback, stood at a little distance from the house ; and that as soon as the door was opened, and she admitted, the carriage and the attendants wheeled round, and at full gallop took the way back to the wood.

Next morning the joy of the company was completed by the appearance of honest Peter, about whom, in the first alarm of the fight, nobody had shown any concern ; and availing himself of this circumstance, he had fled with the baggage on his back into the thickest part of the wood. The whole day he

had wandered about the wood, and was almost starved, till at last a good-natured peasant brought him into the road. He then traced out his master, and arrived just at the moment when, on the removal of the second dressing, the surgeon gave the most sanguine hopes of Frederick's speedy recovery, and Babet and Jeanette stood arm in arm by his bed-side.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE CONCLUSION.

FOR an author to consider all his readers to be persons of the dullest intellects, and therefore to leave them nothing to anticipate, or to supply, would be no less absurd and injudicious than it would be in the manager of a theatre, who, after dropping the curtain on the conclusion of a grand scenic opera, should draw it up once more to exhibit to the spectators the whole mechanism of the metamorphoses, and show them every contrivance by which the various objects were represented.

The narrator of this surprising but true history is convinced that most of his readers, particularly those of the fair sex, (whom, from his own experience, he

knows to possess a peculiar felicity of conjecture, in proof of which they are much quicker of comprehension than men) must long since have penetrated into the contents of the two last chapters, and anticipated the catastrophe. He thinks it only necessary, therefore, to mark the course which the history pursued, merely with dots, as geographers in maps use to point out the route of navigators, that the reader may follow them till he traces our heroes into the haven of Love, constant through every trial.

That Frederick, soon after his separation from his friend, was exchanged; that he returned to his regiment, which during the war had suffered very much, and which, partly to allow it a respite, and partly that it might be recruited to its full complement, was stationed in its old garrison; that the young hero, accustomed to activity, undertook the task
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of clearing the wood of the robbers by whom it was infested ; are circumstances extremely natural, and unnecessary to be insisted upon.

William's elopement was the effect of, perhaps, too nice a feeling of honour, and his speedy return was the effect of a proper display of generosity in the enemy. When he arrived at the headquarters of the general, who was encamped on the frontiers of Switzerland, he voluntarily surrendered himself as a prisoner of war, and, with the noble candour which testifies the innocent man, recounted the story of his flight. The commander in chief did not think it his duty again to expose the life of the prisoner to the fury of his countrymen, by detaining him. He joyfully seized the opportunity which his office of intendant of the exchange of prisoners presented, to rescue William from all farther

farther inconveniences, and that very evening he gave him liberty to return home.

What use William made of his freedom it is easy to conceive. He flew back to the place where he had left his faithful Jeanette, with the hope of still finding her there. When he found that she had got the start of him by twenty miles, he took post-horses, and followed her. Every moment the distance by which they were separated diminished. The last stage he reached an hour after her departure, and the timorous host told him how he had warned her not to proceed; and that in spite of his friendly remonstrances, and Babet's fatigue, she had resolved to continue her journey.

William trembled to think of the danger in which she was involved by her maternal anxiety. He hastened to
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the commandant of the place, an old fellow-soldier, and requested a strong escort to the next stage. Twenty hussars immediately received orders to attend him, and he set off full speed. The tumult in the wood reached his ear, and he arrived just in time to save his wife, and avenge his friend.

The thickest veil concealed the secret of Babet's adventure ; and we should never have been able to penetrate it, if she had not some years after herself communicated the mystery in a moment of confidence to her husband. The captain of the robbers, who had called her name, seized and carried her off, was her brother Philip. In his youth spoiled by indulgence, perverted by the prejudices of birth, he left his country full of chimerical hopes, trusted to the distinction of his birth, and expected to perform an important part among the emigrants,

emigrants, for which he was not qualified. He thought himself neglected; he then joined himself with other discontented persons in the same situation, and became a robber.

For some time he carried on his depredations cautiously, and with success. But when his troop was increased by new accessions, he had the hardihood to engage in some extravagant attempts, which attracted the attention of government, and involved him in the most serious disasters. He was overpowered, his troop dispersed, and he had the good fortune to avoid an ignominious death by making his escape to America.

When in the heat of the battle he recognised his sister on her knees, a spark of fraternal affection awoke in his breast. He forgot his own danger, and thought only of carrying the helpless maid to a place of safety. After the skirmish was over,

over, and the rest of his troop were assembled, he caused her casket to be sought for, returned it to her, and in person conducted her by circuitous paths, known to himself alone, to the parson's house; here he presented her his rugged hand, which she bathed with tears of sorrow to see him fallen so low. All her sisterly admonitions to divert him from his career of guilt—her affecting appeal to her honoured father's spirit—he heard only in sullen silence.

With a heavy heart, and a determination at least not to divulge her brother's shame, she resigned him to his fate, and hastened back to the arms of friendship, in the bosom of a new family; where, in the person of her husband, the orphan found a father, brother, and friend.

Love, friendship, virtue, hope, soon restored Frederick to perfect health. On

William's

William's estate two families now grew and flourished. Harmony, contentment, and cheerfulness beamed in the looks of their parents, and smiled in the eyes of their children. The two friends hung up their arms in the hall, tended their turnips and cabbages, and exclaimed with Voltaire :

Ah ! cachons nous ! passions avec les sages
Le soir ferein d'un jour mêlé d'orages.

FINIS.

